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THE PROBLEM OF THEOPHILUS

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IT MIGHT be thought that in five recent articles [1] the productive ore in the mine of Theophilus of Antioch had been exhausted. On the contrary, these articles have been concerned primarily with the question of what Theophilus said. The basic problem "Why did he say it?" remains unsolved. The purpose of this article is to endeavor to analyze his thought more closely and to determine his place in the religious and philosophical movements of his time.

I. HIS LIFE

The author of the three books to Autolycus (the title is derived from II 1) must have written at least the third one fairly soon after the death of Marcus Aurelius (III 27, 28). It cannot be proved from his books that he lived in the orient, for he mentions the Tigris and Euphrates rivers not as bordering on "our region" but as bordering on "our latitude" (II 24). All that this proves is that he lived north of the torrid zone.[2] He calls himself untrained in rhetoric (II 1), but his references to Homer, Hesiod and Plato, and his use of doxographical materials and a poetical florilegium, suggest that he had at least a normal encyclical education.[3] He tells us (I 14) that at one time he did not believe in resurrection, but that he then encountered some sacred books of the holy prophets and was convinced by their successful predictions. The example he later gives (III 11) is the statement that if the people remained in their evil practices they would be delivered into the hands of all the kingdoms of the earth. This is an allusion to the

[1] "The Decalogue in Early Christianity," HTR 40 (1947), 1–17; "The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch," JBL 66 (1947), 173–96; "Theophilus of Antioch to Autolycus," HTR 40 (1947), 227–56; "The Early Antiochene Anaphora," ATR 30 (1948), 91–94; "Irenaeus and Hellenistic Culture," HTR 42 (1949), 41–51.

[2] Cf. VC 3 (1949), 227. He may, however, be using the word in a less technical sense (cf. Irenaeus, Adv. haer. iii. 11. 8; Origen, De orat. 32).

[3] Cf. HTR 42 (1949), 41–51.

Greek book of Baruch (ii. 4), which apparently comes from the end of the first century A.D. Naturally Theophilus thought of it as older, for in his opinion prophecy ended with Zechariah (III 23).

A problem which will arise when we consider some of the content of the books is whether or not they were written by a bishop of Antioch. Here we need only ask whether the "name dear to God" (= "Christian") in I 1 is really a play on the name "Theophilus" or instead is the basis for the idea that a person named Theophilus wrote the books.

Obviously we know very little about Theophilus (if this was his name), although we certainly know more about his books than did Eusebius, whose reference to them in H. E. iv. 24 shows only (1) that they were in the library at Caesarea or Jerusalem, and (2) that he had not read them carefully, for his dates for the author are before the death of Marcus Aurelius rather than, correctly, after it.

The author was evidently a Christian (I 1, 12, II 16, 33, III 4, 12–15, 30), but as we shall show, he was more a Jew than a Christian. This emphasis on Judaism may be due to his sources, but it is he who is responsible for choosing the sources. And we shall see that he was very close to what the later fathers called the school of Ebion.

II. His Hellenism

By Hellenism we mean the extent to which he uses Greek learning, whether intelligently and sympathetically or stupidly and polemically. In III 2 we find an attack on Hellenistic culture as a whole. The entire range of Greek education is derided as "useless," a conventional word from the Greek diatribe.[4] Our author bases his criticism on the fact that Greek authors deal with uncertain facts, of which they were not eye-witnesses and concerning which they had no accurate information. This is practically a quotation of Josephus (Contra Apionem i. 10). The list of writers, however, does not illustrate this point but is apparently taken at random from some anthology.

His use of a poetic anthology or anthologies is clear from three

[4] J. H. Ropes, The Epistle of St. James (New York, 1916), 203, after Bultmann.

passages. In the first (II 5–7), he criticizes Homer, Hesiod, and Orpheus for their ideas of the origin of the world. Homer (Il. xiv. 201) has no god in his "Ocean." A somewhat similar attack is found in the Jewish apologetic of Clementine Homilies iv–vi (vi. 3), as well as in Athenagoras (Leg. 18). Only the Clementines, however, have the same order as Theophilus: Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus. Hesiod is criticized because he does not say where the chaotic matter at the beginning came from. The same complaint is expressed in Sextus Empiricus, Adv. math. x. 18. Finally the cosmic egg of Orpheus (via the Birds of Aristophanes) is simply mentioned. Theophilus implies that it is too ridiculous to discuss. Perhaps he does not know how to attack it.

The second example is in II 8, where Elter[5] has shown that Theophilus is following an anthology on God and providence very similar to that now extant in Stobaeus, Ecl. i. 2–3. He himself may have inserted a couple of verses from the Oedipus rex of Sophocles which deny the existence of providence, as Elter suggests, or alternatively they may have been dropped at a later date. From the same anthology come the verses in III 7.

The third example is in II 37–38, on the same subject. These verses are derived from the source of Stobaeus, Ecl. i. 3. Oddly enough, in spite of Theophilus' insistence that the poets were inspired by demons (II 8), he points out that sometimes they do agree with the prophets and are therefore trustworthy. Almost all his examples show this agreement.

His favorite poetess, or rather prophetess, among the Greeks, is the Sibyl (II 3, 9, 31, 36, 38). By the Sibyl he means the Hellenistic Jewish forgery of the second century B.C., which he knows in a form given it by Jewish Christian editors. The fragments which he is the first to quote do not come from the original form of the third (and oldest) book of the Sibylline Oracles.

Two Homeric allusions (I 9, Il. v. 340; II 3, Od. xi. 108) tell us nothing about his education, for the first is derived from the source of I 9–10 and the second is commonplace (cf. Josephus, Ant. viii. 108). We must conclude that Theophilus' intelligent or sympathetic understanding of Greek poetry is non-existent.

[5] A. Elter, De gnomologicorum Graecorum historia atque origine commentatio (Bonn, 1893–95), 139.

He uses it primarily as a weapon against mythology, as Epicurus had used it before him.

If we turn to his knowledge of Greek philosophy, we find examples of it in II 4, III 3, and III 5–7. To these passages must be added his analysis of faith in I 8. Here the significant point is his argument that in every human action faith leads the way. He adds the examples of the farmer, who entrusts the seed to the ground, the traveler by sea who trusts the ship and the pilot, the sick man who trusts the physician, and the student who entrusts himself to the teacher. In the contemporary (Christian ?) Sententiae of Sextus (166, ed. Elter, Leipzig, 1892) faith is the leader in all actions. More significantly, we know that the literary leader of the sceptical New Academy, Clitomachus (mentioned by Theophilus in III 7), used the examples of sailing, sowing seeds, marrying and raising children to illustrate the necessity for action even when the issue is uncertain.[6] Theophilus adds the examples of the physician and the teacher from the Socratic-Platonic tradition. Therefore on the positive side of his philosophy Theophilus has affinities with Academic scepticism, and we shall see that this is the case with his negative attitude also.

In II 4 he employs a doxographical collection to show the inconsistencies of Greek philosophers. Unfortunately it reveals his own extreme ignorance of the subject. He begins by ascribing the theology of Epicurus to the Stoa (cf. Aetius, Plac. i. 7. 1, Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh. iii. 218) and concludes that this proves the foolishness of Epicurus and Chrysippus. He next deals with those who ascribe automatic operation to the universe, call the world uncreated and nature eternal, say that there is no divine providence, and call God each person's conscience. This is all taken from an anthology, where the opinions are quoted as those of the poet Menander (Stobaeus, Ecl. i. 6. 9, 14; Monost. 213, 492; Stobaeus, Ecl. i. 6. 1, 10; Monost. 597, 654). Perhaps the titles of the anthology had been lost, or perhaps Theophilus has suppressed them. The next group of philosophers is the old Stoa, those who "dogmatize" that God is a spirit extending through everything (Aetius, Plac. i. 7. 33, Sextus, Empiricus, Pyrrh. iii.

[6] Cicero, Lucullus 109; Origen, Contra Celsum i. 11, p. 63:22 Koetschau, uses exactly the four examples of Clitomachus and they are common in the fathers.

218). Theophilus does not say who they are because he has already described their view as atheism. Finally he speaks of Plato and of Platonists (thus he regards the Platonists' interpretation of Plato as the correct one) and accuses them of regarding God and matter as coaeval. This is the opinion of Platonists in his time, for example Plutarch (De anim. procr. in Timaeo v. 3, Quaest. platon. ii. 2) and Albinus (Eisag. 14, p. 169:26 Hermann), but it goes back to the New Academy, as we see from a fragment of Cicero, De natura deorum (Lactantius, Div. inst. ii. 8. 10–11), which is based on Clitomachus. In this fragment Cicero-Clitomachus compares God's work to that of a craftsman who has his materials before he starts work. Theophilus rejects this comparison. God can make matter ex nihilo.

In III 3 he again attacks philosophers from a sceptical standpoint and argues that they not only contradicted one another but also contradicted themselves. They spoke of gods and then taught atheism. This reflects the idea of Sextus Empiricus, Adv. math. ix. 58, that in his popular expositions Epicurus allowed the existence of God, but when he spoke of nature he rejected it. The following statements are probably based on this first axiom.

In III 3–7 we have a thorough-going attack on the ethics and theology of Greek philosophers, especially those of the old Stoa. Not only his examples but also his methods are derived from the sceptics. The fifth "mode" of the sceptics after Aenesidemus explains how to support suspension of judgment (Diogenes Laertius ix. 83–84),[7] although it must be remembered that the general method is already found in Clitomachus (Sextus Empiricus, Adv. math. ix. 191–93). One should contrast faith in myths with rules of life, customs, laws, and philosophical dogmas; and various permutations should also be employed. Thus in III 3 belief in myth is contrasted with custom and law (Cf. Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh. i. 154, 159); in III 5 dogma is contrasted with custom (cf. i. 155), and in III 6 with law (cf. i. 160); and in III 7 another collection of conflicting dogmas is set forth. The resemblances of the examples Theophilus gives to those of the sceptics have already been noted by Otto and Bardy in their editions.

[7] Cf. A. Goedeckemeyer, Die Geschichte des griechischen Skeptizismus (Leipzig, 1905), 218.

We may observe, however, that in III 5 Theophilus makes a mistake in referring to Herodotus, in III 6 in referring to Plato and in ascribing to Epicurus, as usual, the teaching of the old Stoa.

In III 7 we have another doxographical chaos. Whenever Theophilus cannot think of anything to say of a philosopher, he describes him as teaching the automatic operation of the universe. In this passage he misunderstands and distorts a passage which we find more correctly, surprisingly enough, in Epiphanius (Diels, Doxographi, 589:8). Theophilus thinks there are two schools, but the passage describes the teaching of Epicurus.

Epiphanius: *ἐξ ατόμων δὲ συνεστάναι τὰ πάντα ἠδ' αὖ πάλιν εἰς ἄτομα χωρεῖν*
Theophilus: *οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐξ ἀτόμων αὐτοὺς ἔφασαν συνεστάναι, οἱ δ' αὖ χωρεῖν εἰς ἀτόμους*

It is evident that Theophilus' error arises from his careless misreading of *ἠδ'* as *οἱ δ'*. His gibe at Pythagoras' journey up and down, like his reference in III 2 to the sanctuaries and pillars of Heracles, seems to reflect a burlesque of Pythagorean doctrine like that of Hermippus of Smyrna (Diogenes Laertius viii. 41).[8] A brief mention of Clitomachus suggests that he is the ultimate source of much of Theophilus' material. Euhemerus is called "atheist" as in Sextus, Adv. math. ix. 17, and his rejection of the gods is not confused with that of Diagoras, as Diels suggested (Doxographi, p. 59), but comes from Aëtius, Plac. i. 7. 1. Theophilus rejects metempsychosis from rational man to irrational animals; the same grounds are employed by later Neoplatonists for allegorizing the animals of Plato, Phaedo 81 e, 82 a.[9]

This is all that Theophilus says directly about philosophy, and it is evident that he knows very little about it. We may therefore suspect that when his theological statements take on a philosophical coloring he has derived it from some previous teacher.

If we consider his knowledge of Greek religion we shall find that it too is apparently taken from handbooks (I 9–10, II 3, III 3, 8, 18). It may be significant that much of it is paralleled

[8] Cf. J. H. Waszink, Tertullian De Anima (Amsterdam, 1947), 357.
[9] Ibid., 391; cf. F. Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism (New Haven, 1923), 184.

in the Clementine homilies iv–vi. Many modern scholars have suggested that this section of the homilies is based on a Jewish apology of the early second century.[10] Professor Nock has observed that this apology remains hypothetical. The most we can say, therefore, is that Theophilus was apparently using something very much like it. He was writing in a Hellenistic Jewish environment like that out of which the homilies came. Like Clementine homilies vi. 18 he holds that demons are responsible for the myths (I 10, II 8). From some mythographical source he derives two obscure details: (1) that Zeus killed the goat which had been his nurse on Ida and then skinned her for a coat (I 9, cf. Musaeus in Pseudo-Eratosthenes, Catast. 13), and (2) that a certain Klymenos was in a deluge after Deucalion (III 18); this may possibly refer to Klymenos the father of Phaethon (Hyginus, Fab. 154), and regard Phaethon as the first king after the original deluge (Plutarch, Pyrrh. 1). Or it may be a mistake for Cerambus (Ovid, Metam. vii. 353–56). It is obviously very erudite.

Another interest of Theophilus, if not his major one, is in obscene details. Here he is close to the author of Clem. hom. iv–vi. Both refer to the "shameful sounds" which Egyptians worship (I 10, Hom. x. 16 — probably from the source of iv–vi). Both refer to Zeus' swallowing of Metis (III 3, Hom. iv. 16). And both refer to a passage in Chrysippus in which he tried to allegorize an old painting (possibly by Parrhasius) [11] of Hera and Zeus (III 3, 8).[12] Theophilus adds (III 3) that Zeus "prepared filthy suppers for the gods." This may be a mistaken combination of Clem. hom. v. 24 (Pelops the supper of all the gods) and vi. 2 (Zeus had a supper for the wedding of Thetis and Peleus). Theophilus tries to add to this list the behavior of the Mother of the gods, to whom he refers mysteriously in I 10 and III 3; but all he knows about her is that "she and her sons" pay taxes to the emperor (a quotation of Justin, Apol. i. 27. 2; the mother of the gods is mentioned in i. 27. 4).

[10] Cf. most recently G. Quispel in VC 3 (1949), 113–22, who finds traces of such a work in Minucius Felix.

[11] Cf. Suetonius, Tiberius 44; A. Reinach, Textes grecs et latins relatifs à l'histoire de la peinture ancienne (Paris, 1921), no. 287.

[12] Cf. SVF II 1071–74; A. B. Cook, Zeus III 2 (Cambridge, 1940), 1027 n. 5.

In III 3 Theophilus lists some of the "unspeakable unions and unlawful meals" of the gods. He describes the activities of Kronos, Zeus, Hephaestus and Hera, and then gives a list of the gods whom he has discussed more accurately (i.e., in more detail) in another book. This book cannot be I 9–10, where Poseidon and Athene, included in the list, are not mentioned. He must be speaking of some other work, perhaps his lost work on history mentioned in II 30. He also refers to Athene the war-loving [13] and Aphrodite the shameless. Since they are mentioned together, Theophilus is probably alluding to the judgment of Paris, described in Clem. hom. vi. 2 and 15 as leading to the Trojan war.

In III 8 Theophilus mentions Zeus Tragoedus, "tragedian." People say that he burned his own hand. He is now worshiped as a god by the Romans. The only other reference in classical literature to Zeus Tragoedus as a real deity seems to be Suetonius, Augustus 57, which refers to the emperor's dedication of an image to the god.[14] Is he called Tragoedus because he wore a goatskin, as in I 9? In this case we should have here a reference to the *aegis*, and the burning of his hand might well be due to the thunderbolt, which he hurled with his hand (Hesiod, Theog. 692). Similar ridicule is to be found in Lucian's Zeus Tragoedus.

Two centuries later, Epiphanius of Salamis apparently followed Clement of Alexandria and Theophilus in their analyses of Greek mythology, and he observes (Ancoratus 106, 2–3) that in burning his hand Zeus showed that he was less intelligent than the person who warned the goat-satyr not to kiss fire lest he burn his beard (cf. Plutarch, De inimic. util. 2, p. 86 f). This comparison does not, however, explain why Zeus burned his hand. Again, in III 8 Theophilus also mentions Zeus Latiaris, thirsty for human blood. Epiphanius explains this reference as an allusion to gladiatorial combats. As H. J. Rose has observed in his article "De Iove Latiari," this is probably the correct interpretation.[15] These explanations by Epiphanius do not suggest that he is following some source common to himself and Theophilus, but that he is giving exegesis of Theophilus' obscure statements.

[13] Emending (with Nolte) the meaningless φιλοκόλπος to φιλοπόλεμος.
[14] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in Sitzungsberichte . . . Berlin, 1911, 769.
[15] Mnemosyne N. S. 55 (1927), 273–79.

In fact, we have definite proof that Epiphanius did not use the hypothetical Jewish apology underlying the Clementine homilies, but instead the Περίοδοι Πέτρου αἱ διὰ Κλήμεντος γραφεῖσαι (Pan. haer. xxx. 15. 1),[16] since from it he derived the story of Zeus and Metis (Pan. haer. xxvi. 16. 8; cf. Clem. hom. iv. 16). When Eusebius (H. E. iii. 38. 5) refers to lengthy treatises containing dialogues of Peter and Apion, he is presumably speaking of these Περίοδοι.[17]

Thus we cannot say with any confidence that Theophilus made use of a second-century Jewish apology for his mythographical information. Some of the items which he relates are found in the Grundschrift of the Clementine homilies and recognitions, which probably comes from the early third century.[18] But this fact may be due simply to coincidence, or alternatively to the use of Theophilus by the author of the Grundschrift. All we can say of Theophilus' sources is that they are Euhemerist (I 9) and anti-Stoic (III 8), and that they probably relied on Clitomachus (III 7), as Cicero does in the third book De natura deorum.[19]

One more subject remains to be covered in our discussion of Theophilus as Hellenist. He thinks of himself as an historian and refers (II 30) to his books On History. What does he know about history? He regards Herodotus and Thucydides as unprofitable (III 2), though he admits that in his own chronology there may be errors of fifty, a hundred, or even two hundred years (III 29). Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon began their works with Cyrus or Darius because they were not able to write accurately about ancient history (III 26). This statement, whose factual accuracy may be due to the use of a handbook (cf. Gellius, Noct. att. xv. 23. 2), is an imitation of the remarks of Josephus, Contra Apionem i. 13. And Theophilus' further observation (III 30) that the Greeks do not know biblical history because the alphabet was used by them so late is probably a misunderstanding of two

[16] On their contents cf. H. J. Schoeps, Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums (Tübingen, 1949), 457–79.

[17] They contain (περιέχοντα) dialogues rather than consist of dialogues; against Schoeps, op. cit., 43.

[18] On the date cf. the citations in Schoeps, op. cit., 38–39.

[19] Clitomachus used a Euhemerist source: J. B. Mayor, M. Tullii Ciceronis De Natura Deorum III (Cambridge, 1885), 201.

passages in Contra Apionem i. 7–8 (Greeks wrote history later than Egyptians, Chaldaeans, Phoenicians) and 10 (alphabet from Phoenicians and Cadmus). For Theophilus says that the origin of the alphabet is a question. Did it come from the Chaldaeans, the Egyptians, or the Phoenicians?

His own investigations required the use of the Septuagint, Josephus (Contra Apionem), Chryseros the Nomenclator, and Thallus. The information derived from Thallus is not integrated with that from the other sources. In fact, the only integration which takes place is the dating of Cyrus' death in the 62nd Olympiad and the equating of this date with the 220th year of Rome (III 27). According to Theophilus, Cyrus had reigned 38 years. Perhaps Africanus is rejecting this chronology when he states [20] that Diodorus, Thallus, Castor, Polybius and Phlegon all agree that Cyrus' reign began in the 55th Olympiad. In any event, Theophilus' chronology is not a work to inspire us with awe.[21]

III. His Christian Judaism

In a previous article (HTR 40, 1947, 227–56) we discussed the theology of Theophilus in relation to its sources and as a relatively unified system. Here we are concerned with his motives in saying what he said, and in not saying what he did not say. What is Theophilus defending in his books to Autolycus? Certainly he regards himself as a Christian (I 1, 12, II 16, 33, III 4, 12–15, 30); but he never mentions Jesus, except perhaps as the "evangelic voice" (III 13). He refers to the "triad" of God, his Word and his Wisdom; but a triad which by the addition of "man" becomes a tetrad (II 15) is hardly what Irenaeus, for example, would have regarded as a Trinity — had Irenaeus used the word. Moreover, Theophilus' whole emphasis is on the instrumentality of the Word and Wisdom, and on the uniqueness of the one true God. Word and Wisdom are the "hands" of God (II 18). Word is Spirit and Beginning and Wisdom and Power of the Highest (II 10, with a reference to Luke 1:35), as well as Voice and Son of God (II 22). The Word is attributively God. Theophilus shows this by quoting John 1:1–3; but he immediately takes away

[20] Routh, Reliquiae sacrae II (ed. 2, Oxford, 1846), 271:3 and 8; Eusebius, Praep. evang. x. 10. 4.

[21] Cf. JBL 66 (1947), 189–95.

the force of John's incarnation theology by stating that "whenever the Father of all wants to do so, he sends him into some place where he is present and is heard and seen" (II 22). This implies no more than that Jesus was a prophet, for the Word came down into the prophets and spoke through them (II 10). The Word used Moses as an instrument.

The whole spirit of Theophilus' attitude toward the prophets may be seen by contrasting his remarks with those of Justin in the Dialogue with Trypho. For Justin, the prophets remind the people of God (28, p. 92 Otto) and predict the coming of Christ and the end of the law. For Theophilus, the prophets remind the people of the Law (III 11); the temple was built by the will of God (III 25), and the priests, who always stayed in the temple by the command of God (III 21), could "heal every disease" (Matt. 4:23, etc., of Jesus), including leprosy! And all these priests, rather than Jesus alone (Hebrews 7:11), were successors of Melchizedek (II 31).

As in Justin, the prophets as described by Theophilus foretold the past as it did take place, the present as it does take place, and the future as it will take place (Dial. 7, p. 30; I 14, II 9). But according to Justin (52, p. 176; 120, p. 430) prophecy lasted until the time of John the Baptist; Theophilus III 23 says that Zechariah was the last of the prophets. Moses is the greatest of the prophets, and is called "our prophet" (III 18), while Solomon was "king and prophet" (III 13) and had "extraordinary wisdom" (III 22). Four chapters (III 11–14) are devoted to proving that the prophets agree with the Law, and that the gospels (III 12; thus Theophilus knows more than one) agree with both.

Many early Christian writers try to prove the divinity of Jesus from his miracles, but the only miracles to which Theophilus refers are the signs and wonders worked through Moses (III 9), the healings performed by the priests in the temple (III 21) and the exorcisms performed even now in the name of the true God (II 8). This is evidently the Jewish exorcism mentioned by Justin (Dial. 85, p. 306), not a specifically Christian one.

What place remains for Jesus in Theophilus' scheme? Three passages permit us to draw certain inferences. In II 9 Theophilus speaks of the prophets' predictions of "pestilences, famines, and

wars." The only passage in which these three disasters are predicted seems to be Luke 21:9–11. In II 34 he says that the holy prophets taught avoidance of a list of vices and "whatever anyone does not want done to him, not to do to another." This might be a reference to Tobit 4:15, from a book highly regarded by second century Christians, but the whole passage is more probably a paraphrase of the "western" text of Acts 15:29. Thus as in Justin (Dial. 75, p. 268) the apostles are equated with prophets. But their teaching on this subject comes from Jesus. In III 11 Theophilus observes that after the giving of the Law God sent to the Jewish people prophets "from among their brethren." This is an allusion to Deuteronomy 18:15, in which according to Acts 3:22–24 and 7:35, and probably Mark 9:7 and John 1:21, 25, 6:14, and 7:40, the coming of Jesus is predicted. It is the passage on which the Ebionites relied for their doctrine of the true prophet.[22] Theophilus, however, is more Jewish than the Ebionites. This passage predicts the coming of all the later prophets, who are "prophets of truth" (II 35).

A singular passage on the name "Christian" (I 12) may permit us to draw certain other conclusions. We have elsewhere discussed[23] its affinities with the De baptismo of Melito of Sardis. Here let us ask one question: what is the passage intended to prove? The use of the word τοιγαροῦν in the conclusion shows that this is not the only explanation Theophilus could give, but he does say "we are called Christians because we are anointed with the oil of God." What does this show? It shows not that we are *christianoi*, but that we are *christoi*. This may be nothing but a rather loose etymology, but in Hippolytus' description of the Ebionites we find that Jesus was called Christ by God because he kept the Jewish law; if anyone else had kept it he would have been the Christ; and we too, if we keep it, can become *christoi* (Ref. vii. 34. 2). Theophilus describes his religion as the true θεοσέβεια (II 1, 30, III 4, 15), a favorite Ebionite word.[24] (We must admit that it is also used by other apologists.) But who are the

[22] Schoeps, op. cit., 87–116. It is worth noting that Deut. 18:15 is not cited in the apostolic fathers, the other apologists, Irenaeus, or Clement. Perhaps it presented too many difficulties.

[23] In an article in VC 4 (1950), 33–36.

[24] Schoeps, op. cit., 299.

θεοσεβεῖς? In II 30 they are those who have the Old Testament; in III 4 they are those who are "also called Christians"; and in III 9 they are the Jews.

In passing we may suggest that several of the affinities of Theophilus with the writer Ad Diognetum, noted by Ogara,[25] can be explained if we regard Ad Diognetum as a non-Jewish Christian reply to Theophilus. This writer speaks (1:1) of the *theosebeia* of Christians and proceeds (3–4) to claim that the Jews do not have true *theosebeia*. His whole apology has a more distinctively Christian atmosphere than that of Theophilus.[26]

When we turn from Jesus to Paul we find the same difficulties in Theophilus' thought. He clearly knows the Pauline epistles, just as he knows some of the gospels.[27] But his thought is not simply un-Pauline; it is anti-Pauline. Three examples can be provided. The first is in II 27.

> As by disobedience man acquired death for himself, so by obedience to the will of God, whoever will can obtain eternal life for himself.

As Bardy observes, this is "somewhat astonishing" in the light of Romans 5:19, where it is Christ who through his obedience gains righteousness or justification for us. Theophilus goes on to explain how we are saved.

> For God gave us a law and holy commandments; whoever performs their requirements can be saved and, attaining the resurrection, inherit imperishability.

The Pauline allusions should not conceal from us the fact that this is the opposite of Paul's teaching. The second example is in II 25, where Theophilus states that when a law commands avoidance of something and someone does not obey, it is obvious that it is not the law which brings punishment, but the disobedience and the transgression. This sounds very much like a negation of Romans 7:7–8. The third example is in III 9, where it is said that the Hebrews (also called Jews) are the legitimate seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This contradicts Galatians

[25] Gregorianum 25 (1944), 74–102. These affinities certainly do not show that Theophilus wrote Ad Diognetum.

[26] Cf. W. Telfer in JTS 45 (1944), 220–25.

[27] JBL 66 (1947), 181–84.

3:16 (cf. 3:29, Romans 4:16). Clearly Theophilus is no Paulinist. When he cites I Timothy 2:2 and Romans 13:7–8 as on the same level as prophecy (III 14) does he remember their origin?

Of course, Theophilus' attitude toward these Pauline ideas can be explained partly on the ground that he wrote (and is writing) against Marcion and Apelles, who treated Pauline theology as if it were the gospel. If we look at his long commentary on Genesis, often based on Jewish sources, from this point of view, we shall find him constantly attacking Marcionite exegesis. He shows us in II 14 that he is writing (or that his source is writing) against heresies. He compares islands of refuge in the sea [28] to synagogues where the teachers of truth are. In passing he observes that synagogues are also called "holy churches." It is perfectly clear that he is following a Jewish or Jewish-Christian source. Heresies are compared to rocky islands on which pirates run ships. This romantic touch suggests some faint acquaintance with the Greek novel.[29] But it shows that he has heresies on his mind.

Some anti-Marcionite passages are the following: (1) II 17, no evil or poisonous animals at creation, for it was all "very good"; the animals fell when man did (in answer to criticism of the evils of creation, cf. Harnack, Marcion, ed. 2, Leipzig, 1924, 270*); (2) II 18, God did not need help and was not weak, Harnack, 269*; (3) II 19, the garden did not require man to work in it (same kind of argument); (4) II 23, proof that this story is true (Apelles said it was a myth, Harnack, 413*); (5) II 25, the tree of knowledge did not bring death; disobedience did (exactly against Apelles, Harnack, 415*); (6) II 25, Adam was a child (agreeing with Apelles, Harnack, 415*), but God was carefully bringing him up; (7) II 25, God was not grudging toward Adam (against Marcion, Harnack, 271*); (8) II 25, children must obey their parents; then follows the discussion of Romans 5:19, apparently as interpreted by Marcionites; (9)

[28] These may be islands for proselytes, taking the place of the older Jewish cities of refuge (cf. Philo, De fuga 91–99).

[29] E.g., Xenophon, Eph. i. 13–14, pp. 16–18 Dalmeyda.

II 26, God's asking where Adam was was not a sign of ignorance (against Marcion, Harnack, 269*).[30]

In the light of these examples we should probably infer that the syllogism reported in II 27 is a lost syllogism of Apelles. "Was man by nature mortal? No. Then immortal? No. Then nothing at all."

Theophilus' anti-Marcionite interests may explain some of the things he says, but they do not wholly explain his lack of enthusiasm for Jesus and Paul. He is almost a Jew, or perhaps, in view of his discovery of the prophets reported in I 14, a proselyte. In III 10 he stresses duties of Jews toward proselytes. On the other hand, he is not quite a Jew, for he never mentions circumcision, alters the Decalogue so that the observance of the Sabbath is omitted (cf. HTR 40, 1947, 13–14), and explains "Sabbath" as derived from "seventh" rather than "rest" (II 12). Instead of circumcision he mentions unction (I 12) and stresses the significance of water in the creation (II 13). According to Theophilus God set his spirit above the water in order to vitalize the creation, mingling a light element with a light one (for spirit is light and water is light). Theophilus' idea must mean much to him, for in philosophical circles such as those he is here trying to impress, air is a light element but water is definitely a heavy one (e.g., SVF II 473, p. 155:32). At the same time, Schoeps has pointed out that in the Clementines spirit gives to water its vital force and thence comes the origin of all life (Clem. hom. xi. 24).[31] Theophilus develops a similar thought in II 16. The beings which arose from the waters were blessed by God to show that men were going to receive repentance and remission of sins through water and the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). The Ebionites also spoke of rebirth through baptism.[32]

What shall we say of Theophilus' Christian Judaism? It is evident that in spirit and in content he is very close to Judaism. Jews and Christians alike are defended from the charge of misanthropy (III 10, 14). The "confession" of III 9 is suited for

[30] Also II 29, on the question to Cain. We cite Marcion in Harnack for convenience, and only after examining the sources to see if they are relevant. Cf. G. Quispel, De Bronnen van Tertullianus' Adversus Marcionem (Leiden, 1943).

[31] Schoeps, op. cit., 206–7.

[32] Ibid., 209.

Judaism and Christianity at the same time.[33] The virtues ascribed to Christians in III 15 are very similar to those of Jews as analyzed in Josephus, Contra Apionem ii. 184–235 (cf. Clem. hom. iii. 26). And Theophilus' entire theology is strongly influenced by Judaism. On the other hand, he nowhere mentions circumcision or the keeping of the Sabbath, as we have said, and he calls himself a Christian.

Should we call him a Judaizer? He is considerably more radical than most of the Judaizers discussed in the recent study of the relations between Jews and Christians by Marcel Simon.[34] At the same time, he is not urging Christians to keep the whole Law of Moses; for him, the Law consists of a revised Decalogue which includes "judgments" (Exodus 23:6–8) and duties toward proselytes (Exodus 23:9). The Judaism which he upholds is the "liberal" Judaism of the Diaspora.[35]

Is he an Ebionite? If we compare his views with those of the Ebionites as described by Schoeps in his Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums, we find Theophilus often more Jewish than they are. He does not speak of Jesus as the true prophet or the new Moses; he is not opposed to the temple or its cultus; and he certainly does not reject the prophets or refrain from using the Pauline epistles. A trace of the Ebionite theory of interpolations in the Law may perhaps be found in his rewriting of the Decalogue, but the Ebionites would never have considered the Decalogue interpolated. When we consider his Christology, however, we find certain elements in it which are close to Ebionism. We have already shown that the place of Jesus in Theophilus is not very high. We may also infer from his quotation of the third fragment of the Sibylline oracles (II 36) that Jesus was not born as God, for "God cannot be born of human parents." Moreover, his description in II 24 of what Adam might have accomplished is clearly modeled on what he thinks Jesus did accomplish. God gave Adam a "principle of progress" (*ἀφορμὴ προκοπῆς*) so that he could "grow" (cf. Luke 2:40, 52) and "become perfect" (cf. Luke 13:32, James 3:2), and be de-

[33] God the Creator, Providence, holy Law "sufficient for all righteousness"; cf. Clem. hom. iv. 13, 22.

[34] Verus Israel (Paris, 1948), 356–93.

[35] Ibid., 74–82.

clared God, and thus ascend into heaven, possessing immortality. The word προκοπή was used by Ebionites to describe the ethical achievement of the human Jesus.[36]

Theophilus' Logos doctrine, however, differentiates him from the Ebionites, and a teaching similar to his concerning the man Jesus is to be found in other contemporary groups, above all among the circle of Theodotus of Byzantium, excommunicated by Victor of Rome.[37] His views as set forth by Hippolytus (Ref. vii. 35) are close to those of Theophilus. He differs from Theophilus in three respects. In the first place, Epiphanius tells us that Theodotus rejected both the gospel and the apocalypse of John.[38] In the second place, his Greek learning was far superior to that of the bishop of Antioch.[39] In the third place, we do not know that his relation to Judaism was close.

If we look for Theophilus' doctrine elsewhere, we shall find it clearly expressed and held by only one later theologian: Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch in the latter half of the third century. Whether or not Paul was precisely a dynamistic monarchian remains a debatable question. It cannot be denied that Theophilus was one.

It is surprising to find in the see of Antioch toward the end of the second century a man who represents so much of what Ignatius had attacked seventy years earlier. We may observe, however, that there is no mention of a bishop of Antioch among

[36] Eusebius, H. E. iii. 27. 2; Epiphanius, Pan. haer. xxx. 18. 5. If we continue reading from II 24 to II 25, while bearing in mind the probability that while Theophilus discusses the work of Adam he has Jesus in mind, we shall perhaps find further traces of his interpretation of the life of Jesus. This seems to be the case in his discussion of obedience to parents. Children must obey their parents, and if their parents, how much more the God and Father of all? Furthermore, it is shameful for little children to have ideas beyond their years. For just as one gradually grows in age, so he grows in knowledge. Obviously this analysis is relevant to Adam. But it can also be regarded as an explanation of the difficult (from his point of view) passage Luke 2:40–52, where at the age of twelve Jesus recognizes that God, not Joseph, is his father. Theophilus can be understood as replying that (a) Jesus' reply to his parents (Luke 2:49) simply stressed his duty toward God, the Father of all; (b) he obeyed his parents by returning with them to Nazareth (Luke 2:51); and (c) he could not have regarded God as uniquely his father, because this conception came only with advancing years (Luke 2:52). Epiphanius (Pan. haer. xxx. 29. 5–11) uses this passage in Luke against the Ebionites.

[37] Eusebius, H. E. v. 28. 6.

[38] Pan. haer. liv. 1. 1 (or is this conjecture from their lack of a Logos-doctrine?)

[39] Cf. R. Walzer, Galen on Jews and Christians (Oxford, 1949), 75–86.

those who opposed Jewish Quartodecimanism in the East (Eusebius, H. E. v. 23), and that a few years later Serapion of Antioch wrote against a convert from Christianity to Judaism (H. E. vi. 12. 1). We may then conclude that there is adequate evidence of an historical situation which permitted a dynamistic monarchian Judaizer to become bishop of Antioch in this period. Moreover, there was a large and influential Jewish community at Antioch, as C. H. Kraeling has shown.[40] Again, there may well have been an influx of Jews into the church there after the destruction of Jerusalem in 135. And finally, Theophilus was a well-known controversialist, whose work against Marcion may have been used by Irenaeus [41] and whose work against Hermogenes was certainly used by Tertullian.[42]

The existence of Theophilus as bishop of Antioch proves conclusively the indistinctness of the line between orthodoxy and heresy in the late second century, as well as of the line between Judaism and Christianity. In the third century the line became considerably sharper, as Paul of Samosata discovered, and the works of Theophilus became lost in obscurity. Were it not for one eleventh century manuscript we could never have imagined his Christian Judaism. Perhaps undiscovered papyri have further surprises in store.

[40] JBL 51 (1932), 130–60.

[41] F. Loofs, Theophilus von Antiochien Adversus Marcionem (Leipzig, 1930), 44–80.

[42] VC 3 (1949), 228–29.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DOCTRINE OF PLASTIC NATURE

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Few eras are more interesting and profitable to study than those in which the basic ideas of mankind change under the impact of new discoveries and ideas. Our own appears to be such a period; of previous ages perhaps only the ebullient Renaissance can equal it. At its English beginnings in the sixteenth century men reached avidly for new experiences; in the course of time they tried to codify them into theories which would do justice to the observed facts and at the same time harmonize as far as possible with the dicta transmitted from the past. These early efforts resulted in the foundation of the modern methods of science, not to mention permanent and still unchallenged achievements like Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood or Boyle's theory of gases. Such is the seventeenth century: the first great age of scientific generalization in English history.

Not the least striking fact of the intellectual milieu of these years is its varied conceptions of matter. Since the basic premises of modern science were being laid, men were trying to dissociate matter from the various occult phenomena with which it had been invested in the past. Only thus could it be isolated from, say, demonology and be investigated as to its inherent properties. Some of the philosophers who made the attempt — like Hobbes — were roundly damned for their pains; but witchcraft persecutions rapidly dwindled in seventeenth century England, and the growth of the knowledge of physics must have contributed to their decline. These scientific predecessors of ours — or at least such of them as hoped to escape the damaging charge of atheism — had, however, a basic tenet which they dared not overlook: all wanted to believe that matter is not utterly separated by a pure dualism from God or from the soul. Such a separation was indeed implied by the theories of René Descartes, who was attempting to establish a clear-cut division between mind and matter.

Gassendi and others were going even further in the revival of atomism. Hobbes, who was for most of his pious contemporaries little better than an incarnated devil, held that matter in motion was the source of life.[1] Such criticism of traditional ways of thought as these gave a tremendous vitality in the seventeenth century to the problem of how spirit and matter are interrelated and interact. As early scientists the orthodox could not deny the importance of matter; as Christians they dared not separate it from spirit. In their endeavor to steer between this Scylla and Charybdis, seventeenth century intellectuals produced a surprising variety of solutions to the problem of this relationship; sometimes a single writer combined several.

Although I plan to deal here with only one of the answers to this spirit-matter dilemma of the English seventeenth century, it might be interesting to mention a few other solutions which still commanded followers. One of the oldest is the idea of a celestial intelligence infusing life into matter. Avicenna had advanced this doctrine, as had Fernelius and Scaliger in a modified form in the early years of the sixteenth century. The conception derives ultimately from Aristotle's theory of soul origins in the Generation of Animals. Akin to it is another old idea more forcefully opposed in the seventeenth century: the scholastic notion of substantial forms which had been elaborated by Alexander of Hales. The scientists greeted this venerable theory with particular displeasure; Boyle, for instance, inveighed against it as a meaningless conception in nearly every one of his works. Sir Matthew Hale calls such Forms only "the various Modifications of Matter. . . . This Hypothesis therefore seems for the most part, to be a kind of artificial contrivance." [2] Still another and very different solu-

[1] As he wrote, "It is true that the earth produced the first living creatures of all sorts but man. . . . So that it is evident that God gave unto the earth that virtue. Which virtue must needs consist in motion, because all generation is motion," Decameron Physiologicum, in The English Works of Thomas Hobbes, ed. Sir Wm. Molesworth, London (1839), VII, 176. Robert Boyle disagrees in his Sceptical Chymist, Oxford (1680), p. 380: "I confess I cannot well Conceive, how from matter, Barely put into Motion, and then left to it self, there could emerge such Curious Fabricks as the Bodies of men and perfect Animals, and . . . the seeds of living Creatures." In his Two Choice and Useful Treatises, London (1682), p. 16, Joseph Glanvill disclaims Hobbes' view.

[2] The Primitive Origination of Mankind, London (1677), p. 10.

tion lies in the revived peripatetic belief in the potency of matter — Milton's theory, as I plan to show elsewhere.

Last, and most important for the second half of the century, is the idea of plastic nature, closely related to the earlier theory of seminal reasons — the *logoi spermatikoi* or *rationes seminales* of the Stoics and Neo-Platonists. Since the notion of a plastic power permeating all of creation appears to have been most widespread among both theologians and scientists in this age, I plan in the remainder of this study to explore some of the ramifications of the theory.[3] The conception, a particularly interesting one because it arose purely from the need to combat what were looked upon as materialistic and atheistic tendencies, held sway among almost all important English thinkers for a generation, and then quickly disappeared from view.

In England the word *plastic* in this sense first makes its appearance, so far as I am aware, in Henry More's Psychozoia (1642), where "plastick might" is given as an attribute to Aether.[4] The poem, however, does not indicate just what meaning was attached to the word. The next reference appears in Sir Thomas Browne, who uses the idea in both his Vulgar Errors and his Garden of Cyrus. In the last (1658) he writes,

[3] It is not my present intention to trace the history of the term before its entrance into English letters. But it is a very old idea, certainly dating at least to the Orphic Hymns. Thus in Hymn 11, "To Nature" (The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus, trans. Thomas Taylor, London, 1896, p. 32), nature is called

> Father of all, great nurse, and mother kind,
> Abundant, blessed, All-spermatic mind:
> Nature, impetuous, from whose fertile seeds
> And plastic [plasteira] hand this changing scene proceeds.

The concept also appears in Galen. See, for instance, the diaplastic activity in his On the Natural Faculties, I, v–vi.

Daniel Sennert in his Physica Hypomnemata, Lugduni (1637), pp. 158f., asserts that the idea was furthered by Albertus Magnus. But the later Renaissance probably drew it from J. Schegkii, De Plastica seminis facultate libri tres, Argentorati (1580). I have not found a copy in this country; some of its ideas, however, are available in summary in Sennert, loc. cit., and, more briefly, in Pierre Bayle, Dictionary Historical and Critical, London (1737), s.v. Sennertus. I should add that none of the English thinkers who support the concept pleads any source as authority for it. Thus they probably felt little or no limitation as to what attributes it might possess.

[4] I, 15, in Philosophical Poems of Henry More, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, Manchester (1931). Aether the poet identified with "a subtill fiery liquor or liquid fire," ibid., p. 178.

he that observeth the rudimental spring of seeds, shall find strict rule, although not after this order. How little is required unto effectual generation, and in what diminutives the plastick principle lodgeth is exemplified in seeds, wherein the greater mass afford so little compro-duction.[5]

That the term was even then an unfamiliar one in England is evidenced by a letter written to Sir Thomas by one H. Power: "what you meane by the plastick principle 'lodging in these diminutive particles,' I doe not well understand." [6] Indeed, it is to be expected that the theory did not gain great currency until the influence of Hobbes and Descartes was felt about mid-century. Then the divines at Cambridge University particularly made it their own in their efforts to combat the materialism towards which they saw these two writers leading the world.[7]

For those acquainted with the theory of Augustinian exemplarism worked out fully by W. C. Curry in his Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns (1937) and applied to Milton in his "Milton's Scale of Nature," [8] the basic notion is already familiar. There seems to be no essential difference between the attributes of the *logoi spermatikoi* or seminal reasons, which he has so adequately described, and the seventeenth century use of the term plastic nature; indeed the two are almost interchangeable. Perhaps the need for the new name came from a desire to avoid direct dependence upon ideas associated with the Roman Catholic tradition or the pagan traditions of Neo-Platonism and Stoicism. Whatever the reason for the choice of a new terminology, these men believed that God had at the creation endowed matter with a spiritual power (plastic nature), the lowest such power in existence. It functioned as the last of the chain of incorporeal substances which descended from God through angels and the rational soul; at the divine command it ordered the rude matter successively into the creation of the Six Days. Since then it has

[5] In The Works of Sir Thomas Browne, ed. Simon Wilkin, London (1900), II, 517.

[6] Ibid.

[7] A number of studies bear upon this question. See particularly Marjorie Nicolson, "The Early Stage of Cartesianism in England," SP, XXVI (1929), 356–74, and Sterling P. Lamprecht, "The Role of Descartes in Seventeenth-Century England," Studies in the History of Ideas, New York (1935), 179–240.

[8] In Stanford Studies in Language and Literature (1941), pp. 188ff.

continued to form matter into various organisms. As will appear, it is in fact a convenient catch-all for almost every sub-sensitive manifestation of life.

Clearly the theory has close affinities with the classical and medieval belief in the vegetative soul. As Ralph Cudworth says, "this plastic nature is so far from being the first and highest life, that it is indeed the last and lowest of all lives, it being really the same thing with the vegetative, which is inferior to the sensitive." [9] Robert Boyle is echoing the same conception when he writes that in natural bodies there are "forms that dispose the matter they modify for the reception of a noble stamp, for which reason I sometimes call them preparatory forms." These, he adds, are only "a harbinger that disposes the matter to receive a more perfect form . . . as in the embryo the vegetative and the sensitive soul is but preparatory to the rational." [10] Evidently these men wanted to assert, in opposition to writers like Hobbes, that the plastic power represents not merely matter in motion but some manifestation of spirit or incorporeal substance. Thus Cudworth goes on to urge that "though the plastic nature be the lowest of all lives, nevertheless since it is a life, it must needs be incorporeal." [11] Every writer on the subject stresses that this is a force operating blindly to achieve divine ends of which it is unconscious. More, for instance, states that "the Plastick powers in the world are . . . onely Vital and Fatal," [12] a belief echoed by George Rust:

the great principle of vegetative life will necessarily shape the matter, when duely modified, into all kinde of trees, plants, herbs and flowers:

[9] The True Intellectual System of the Universe, London (1845), I, 251. Only Henry More seems to have let his enthusiasm for the new term run away to the extent of applying it to the sensitive as well as the vegetative soul. In his Enchiridion Ethicum (available in reprint in Facsimile Text Society, New York, 1930, pp. 35, 37–8), he urges that the "Plastic Part of the Soul . . . does also in some degree submit to Reason." Thus he comes to associate the plastic part with the passions in his ethical system, in opposition to the intellectual powers. As he continues, "the Intellectual Part of the Soul strives with the Plastic; which, tho fiercely abetted and incited by the Spirit of Nature in some certain Desires and Appetites; yet on the other side, a Divine Power is at hand, urging resistance against all such incantations."

[10] The Origin of Forms and Qualities, in The Works of Robert Boyle, London (1772), III, 116–17.

[11] Op. cit., p. 252.

[12] From his notes in Glanvill, op. cit., p. 129.

for the inferior spirit of the world acts not by choice, but fatally; and being essentially stored with an universal Seminality, will not fail to bring her treasure into view when invited by congruous and sequacious dispositions of matter.[13]

Besides helping the pious to escape materialism, the concept of plastic nature also took from God the responsibility for creating and maintaining every single atom of animated matter. Minds in the seventeenth century found it unworthy of their idea of the Almighty that he should constantly exert himself in such unimportant details; a subordinate spiritual power could do this work without detracting from omnipotence. Says Cudworth,

unless there be such a thing admitted as a plastic nature, that acts . . . for the sake of something . . . , it seems, that one or other of these two things must be concluded; that either in the efformation and organization of the bodies of animals, as well as the other phenomena, every thing comes to pass fortuitously, and happens to be as it is, without the guidance and direction of any mind or understanding; or else, that God himself doth all immediately, and, as it were with his own hands, form the body of every gnat and fly, insect and mite, as of other animals in generations . . . because it is not conceived by any, that the things of nature are all thus administered, with such exact regularity and constancy everywhere, merely by the wisdom, providence and efficiency of those inferior spirits, demons or angels.[14]

In the upshot, then, besides behaving very much like the vegetative soul, plastic nature possessed many of the attributes of the Platonic *anima mundi*: it put all matter into the proper order at the original creation, and it has worked immediately and within each parcel of matter ever since then to produce the configurations of the various creatures. As Cudworth says, "Besides this plastic nature which is in animals, forming their several bodies artificially . . . , there must be also a general plastic nature in the macrocosm."[15] This nature is to be conceived,

[13] A Letter of Resolution Concerning Origen (1661), reprinted by Facsimile Text Society, New York (1933), p. 84.

[14] Op. cit., pp. 218–19.

[15] Ibid., p. 260. Cf. Henry More, Immortality of the Soul, in A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings, London (1662), p. 193: "The Spirit of Nature therefore, according to that notion I have of it, is, A substance incorporeal, but without Sense and Animadversion, pervading the whole Matter of the Universe,

however, not as an external force applied to each parcel of matter (for this would suggest that it is only a material force operating through motion) but as an internal and vital power working immediately upon the passive matter which contains it. Divines of the seventeenth century all agreed that spirit might operate in matter, penetrating it and directing its activities. But they found it hard to state just how this union was achieved. Thus More writes of "vital congruity," which is

> chiefly in the Soul it self, it being the noblest Principle of Life; but is also in the Matter, and is there nothing but such modification thereof as fits the Plastick part of the Soul, and tempts out that Faculty into act.
>
> Not that there is any Life in the Matter with which this in the Soul should sympathize and unite; but it is termed Vital because it makes the Matter a congruous Subject for the Soul to reside in, and exercise the functions of life. For that which has no life it self, may tie to it that which has. . . . Now as we see that the Perceptive part of the Soul is thus vitally affected with that which has no life in it, so it is reasonable that the Plastick part thereof may be so too; That there may be an Harmony betwixt Matter thus and thus modified, and that Power that we call Plastick, that is utterly devoid of all Perception . . . ; that which ties the Soul and this or that Matter together, is an unresistible and unperceptible pleasure, if I may so call it, arising from the congruity of Matter to the Plastick faculty of the Soul.[16]

Although we may look upon this union as quite an occult process, the men who accepted the theory held otherwise. Living in an age which was witnessing the rapid development of empiricism, they would not be likely to retreat to a completely hidden and mysterious principle. Indeed, given a belief in incorporeal substance extending through various levels of being from the divine through the material, one today might almost agree with Cudworth that

> he, that asserts an occult quality for the cause of any phenomenon, does indeed assign no cause at all of it, but only declare his own

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and exercising a Plastical power therein according to the sundry predispositions and occasions in the parts it works upon, raising such Phaenomena in the World, by directing the parts of the Matter and their Motion, as cannot be resolved into mere Mechanical powers."

[16] Immortality of the Soul, in A Collection, pp. 120–21.

ignorance of the cause: but he, that asserts a plastic nature, assigns a determinate and proper cause, nay the only intelligible cause, of that which is the greatest of all phenomena in the world. . . . Mind and understanding is the only cause of orderly regularity; and he that asserts a plastic nature, asserts mental causality in the world.[17]

The theory was particularly helpful in explaining the work of creation in Genesis, as had been true of the earlier belief in seminal reasons; for it seemed to harmonize Biblical doctrines with the new scientific discoveries. "Plastic nature," writes Cudworth, "is a thing that domineers over the substance of the whole corporeal universe, and which, subordinately to the Deity, put both heaven and earth in this frame in which now it is." [18] On the basis of Genesis and other sources, the seventeenth century generally considered that the Spirit which moved over the deep diffused the stuff of life through the waters; from the water the earth received it and so was impregnated with life — that is, with plastic nature. From this the work of the Six Days was successively drawn at God's command. As Hale annotates the verse in Genesis, whatever the Spirit was, it

derived into it [the matter] motive Powers or Energies. . . . It did gradually digest and separate its parts, whereby they became more capable of disposition and order . . . . It did transfuse into this stupid, dead, and unactive *Moles* certain activity and vital influence . . . and the several parts thereof were impregnated with several kinds of vital influence, varied and diversified according to their several parts and uses. . . . And this gives us an account how Activity and active Forms, Powers or Qualities were derived into Matter, namely, not from Matter it self, or such which is meerly unactive and passive; but from another Principle, namely, the vigorous influx of this Spirit that moved upon the face of the Water . . . , the plastick, formative, digesting Principle that pervaded it, the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the Waters.[19]

[17] Op. cit., p. 234.

[18] Ibid., p. 254.

[19] Op. cit., p. 293. Thomas Robinson, in New Observations on the Natural History of This World of Matter and This World of Life, London (1696), p. 20, holds that "By Light is to be understood the vast Aetherial flame, which whilst it was in Mass diffus'd its bright shining Rays, not only through the Material Regions, but the Planetary and Coelestial Spheres: This Aetherial flame was the *Anima Mundi*, the Vehicle of Life, wherein was contained the Seminal and Specific Forms of all sublunary Creatures (Man only excepted) and then danc'd about the Passive Matter like Atoms in the Morning Sun Beams; until its Pro-

From this action, he goes on to say, heat and light eventuated, for they are in a sense the same as the life principle. As Milton Hale believes that the excess light is deposited in the sun, which accordingly becomes a source of life and which he says "infuseth into some Particles of Matter well prepared and digested a kind of Vital and Seminal Principle." [20] Thus light becomes, in the words of another divine, "the Formal Cause or the Male Parent of all mixt Productions." [21] Even a scientist like Boyle agrees in this preëminent position of the sun; in his General History of the Air, for instance, he holds that

> those eminent stars and planets . . . are not to be considered by us as sluggish inergetical bodies, or as if they were set only to be as bare candles to us, but as bodies full of proper motion, or peculiar operation, and of life; the sun not only shining upon the rest of the planets, but, by his quickning warmth, awakening, stirring, and raising, the motions, properties, and powers, that are peculiar to them.[22]

The properties of sunlight are clearly much the same as the operations of the plastic power; the sunlight apparently is either identical with this power or acts as a catalyst to bring it to activity. As Boyle continues,

> our planet . . . is not only enlightned, warmed, cherished and fructified, by the power, virtue, and influence of the sun, but hath its proper magnetical planetary virtue also fermented, stirred, agitated and

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lifick Slime, by vertue of its Plastick Power was modifi'd and prepar'd for receiving of Life." Robinson deserves to be known as the last of the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century. He entered Christ's College in 1664 and graduated in 1668; thus his writing undoubtedly reflects the teachings of Cudworth or More. He became Vicar of Ousby, Cumberland, where he died in 1719.

[20] Op. cit., p. 306. I have traced the theory at greater length in "Milton's Materialistic Life Principle," JEGP, XLV (1946), 68–76. I should now modify my terminology there from "spiritual materialism" to the proper seventeenth century words, "incorporeal substance."

[21] Robinson, op. cit., p. 21.

[22] Works, V, 640. Note also his Sceptical Chymist, pp. 163–64: "it will be alledged, that [my] Examples [of formations] are all taken from Plants, and Animals, in whom the Matter is Fashioned by the Plastick power of the seed, or something analogous thereunto. Whereas the Fire do's not act like any of the Seminal Principles, but destroys them all when they come within its Reach. But to this I . . . Answer, That whether it be a Seminal Principle, or any other which fashions that Matter after those various manners I have mentioned to You, yet 'tis Evident, that either by the Plastick principle Alone, or that and Heat Together, or by some Other cause capable to contex the matter, it is yet possible that the matter may be Anew contriv'd into such Bodies."

awakened in it, which it remits back with the reflected light of the sun; and together with this magnetic planetary property of the earth, which is stirred and raised by the sun, are awakened also the seminal dispositions, odours, and ferments, that are lodged in, and proper unto, particular regions and places.[23]

Thus it is that the original creation and all subsequent life are not to be looked upon as the products of mere motion operating in matter but as the effects of an intrinsic spiritual power. In opposition to Cartesians or Epicureans, Boyle thinks that

the wise Author of nature did not only put matter into motion, but, when he resolved to make the world, did so regulate and guide the motions of the small parts of the universal matter, as to reduce the greater systems of them into the order they were to continue in; and did more particularly contrive some portions of that matter into seminal rudiments or principles, lodged in convenient receptacles (and as it were wombs) and others into the bodies of plants and animals.[24]

The work of the Six Days is then a very easy matter to explain. At God's command the earth, already impregnated by the force of plastic nature, immediately produced all plants and animals. According to the theory of seminal reasons, there were actual seeds of future creatures present in the matter. On this one detail the theory of plastic nature tended to leave this closely allied conception of the *logoi*: under this theory there seems to be only a force operating in the matter at the original creation rather than actual seeds. As Hale says of the creation,

this Production was not by any formed antecedent Seed dispersed in it [i.e., the matter], but immediately; the Vegetable Individuals were antecedent to any Semina that might be productive of it . . . though in the secondary production by generation the Semen precedes the thing generated.[25]

This is, however, a minor detail to separate the two theories, and other writers do not insist upon it.

The conception of plastic nature helped clear up another item which is bothersome even to fundamentalists of our own day —

[23] Works, V, 641.
[24] Works, III, 48.
[25] Op. cit., p. 300.

the origin of fossils and gems. Under the theory, such objects were considered to be the production of this power blindly making these various objects wherever they are found. After all, it did not understand its own purpose and produced forms in any suitable matter whatsoever. Sennert, who specifically argued against the idea of plastic nature itself, was forced to admit the existence of such a force if only to account for these phenomena:

there are certain spirits, who have in themselves the architectonic power of forming gems and metals, and who in the earth, each according to his species, produce metals, stones, gems, and give them their shape, colour, and other properties, and that these spirits disperse themselves in the mines of gems and metals, and produce those metals and gems . . . . But from what abodes or places those spirits came, we are entirely ignorant, since we know not what is the internal constitution of the globe of the earth.[26]

Indeed, the theory of a plastic power in the earth easily accounted for the presence of gems or fossils. In both cases the blind and fatal power formed the matter suitably; fossils result from the actuation of life by this blind power where the creature produced cannot by any chance live. It operates even there, nevertheless, since it is not cognizant of ends. Thus, says Hale, petrified shells "have induced many Learned Men to attribute these Phaenomena to the Plastick power of the Earth." He is, however, doubtful: "if they had been the Product of the Plastick power of the Earth, [they] would have been Annually re-produced." [27] Thomas Robinson, who is more naïve, is also more positive: shells and the like found in minerals

receiv'd these Forms and Shapes at the Creation of this Material Globe, when Matter was in a Fluid and Waterish Mass; and when there was a commixture of Light and Darkness, of the Plastick and Vivific Powers; for then the Vivifick Spirit of Nature disseminated the Specific Forms of those Animals of the lowest degree of Life in those waterish Funds and Promptuaries of Matter.[28]

[26] Quoted from Defensio Tractatus de origine formarum pro Daniele Sennerto (1638) in Bayle, loc. cit.

[27] Op. cit., pp. 192–3. In The Usefulness of Natural Philosophy in Works, II, 44, Boyle supports the same notion, suggesting that earth which has once produced diamonds will do so again if put aside for a long enough time.

[28] Op. cit., pp. 105–06.

Boyle's attitude is instructive. In his History of Fluidity and Firmness he agrees that "it is a plastic principle implanted by the most wise creator in certain parcels of matter, that does produce such concretions" as gems, adding that "these effects depend most commonly upon an internal principle." [29] But he is not certain of how this principle operates. His Essay about the Origine and Virtues of Gems is more sceptical: salts, he urges, which "are so curiously and Geometrically shap'd" require "no necessity to fly to a distinct Architectonick principle" since such bodies "may receive their shapes from the Coalition of such single invisible Corpuscles . . . ; this may be apply'd also to other Bodies." But the careful scientist adds that "as to the exquisite uniformity of Shape, which is so admir'd in Gems, and is thought to demonstrate their being form'd by a Seminal and Geometrizing Principle . . . , I do not find the uniformity to be near so great as is wont to be imagined." [30] The questioning scientist in Boyle seems to have over-ridden at least partially his belief in such a force manifesting itself at the material and lifeless level.

Besides abetting religious leaders like More and Cudworth who wished to meet honestly the challenge of empirical discoveries, the conception was helpful to scientific investigators who wished to avoid the implications of pure materialism. It should be abundantly clear already that Boyle accepted many of the basic premises of plastic nature; the foremost scientist of the first half of the century, William Harvey, also found the idea satisfying. His Circulation of the Blood, published in 1628, appeared too early to exhibit the term, but it is used frequently in his study Of the Generation of Animals of 1651. In this first important treatise on its subject since Aristotle, Harvey studied the growth of the chick in the egg and explained his observations as an exhibition of the plastic power actually at work: the germinating part of the egg, he writes, dilates, and from it "the latent plastic force [*plastica vis*] breaks forth and germinates . . . . Such at the outset is animal life, which the plastic force of nature puts in motion from the most insignificant beginnings." So it is, he later urges, that "the plastic force cuts up, and distributes, and reduces

[29] Works, I, 434.
[30] London (1672), pp. 55, 71.

into limbs the same homogeneous material; and makes out of a homogeneous material organs which are dissimilar." [31] Harvey's interpretation of this plastic power is, however, characteristic of scientific rather than religious conceptions: instead of being proof for the existence of an immaterial substance, this force is for him the same as the efficient cause, derived, in his theory, from the cock and operating upon matter contributed by the hen. And yet he admits as possible the same solar force which is found in the religious theories: "The cock and the hen are especially fertile in the spring; as if the sun, or heaven, or nature, or the soul of the world, or the omnipotent God — for all these names signify the same thing — were a cause in generation superior and more divine than they." [32]

Finally, the theory also provided a convenient explanation for the production of monsters. For if God indeed continues to support all the forms of life in the world, we must deny him either supreme power or supreme goodness if we assert that he also creates these abnormalities. But if bodily form is instead derived from the lowest of his delegated powers, the plastic, the difficulty vanishes, for then it is the weakness of the power before an obstinate matter which is at fault. As Rust says, "where the matter is more pure and pliant, there no strokes will miscarry or be perverted, but the whole impression will be exact, and faithfully answer the beautiful Idea according to which the plastick works." [33]

Such, then, was the theory of plastic nature. In its heyday it commanded the allegiance of nearly every important thinker in England. But today we can note only the worthy end which it was thought to serve in opposing atomism and Cartesianism. For a flaw was present from the very beginning — a flaw which inevitably precipitated its demise even before the end of the century. It explained the unknown by asserting another quite hypothetical unknown. Joseph Glanvill was one of the first to put his finger on this basic weakness. As early as 1661 he wrote,

[31] Translated by Robert Willis in The Works of William Harvey, London (1847), pp. 229, 235, 335.

[32] Ibid., p. 368.

[33] Op. cit., p. 119. More, Immortality of the Soul, in A Collection, p. 102, and Cudworth, op. cit., p. 223, echo the same idea.

The Plastick faculty is a fine word: But what it is, how it works, and whose it is, we cannot learn; no, not by a return into the Womb; neither will the Platonick Principles unriddle the doubt: For though the Soul be supposed to be the Bodies Maker, and the builder of its own house; yet by what kind of Knowledge, Method, or Means, is as unknown.[34]

Indeed, Kenelm Digby, writing in 1644, had argued in quite a similar fashion against just such a power: "to effect this work of generation, there needs not be supposed a forming virtue, or *Vis formatrix*, of an unknown power and operation; as those that consider things suddenly and but in gross use to put." [35] He adds uncomfortably, however, that he has nothing better to offer.

The momentum of belief in plastic nature and similar forces began to wane by the last quarter of the century under the twin impacts of rationalism and empiricism. Locke, for instance, notes vaguely that Aristotle uses the word *physis* "for a plastic power, or a kind of 'anima mundi,' presiding over the material world, and producing the order and regularity of motions, formations, and generations in it," [36] but in another place he argues that such a conception is meaningless:

Concerning the real essences of corporeal substances . . . there are, if I mistake not, two opinions. The one is, of those, who using the word essence for they know not what, suppose a certain number of those essences, according to which all natural things are made, and therein they do exactly every one of them partake, and so become of this or that species. The other, and more rational opinion, is of those who look on all natural things to have a real, but unknown constitution of their insensible parts; from which flow those sensible qualities, which serve us to distinguish them one from another, according as we have occasion to rank them into sorts under common denominations. The former of these opinions, which supposes these essences, as a certain number of forms or moulds, wherein all natural things, that exist, are

[34] The Vanity of Dogmatizing, Facsimile Text Society, New York (1931), pp. 43–44.

[35] Two Treatises, London (1669), p. 289. In his Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants, written in 1660 and published in ibid., p. 220, new pagination, he criticizes those who have "recourse to a *vis formatrix*, and other insignificant terms . . . ; 'tis want of consideration and judgment, which makes men fly to occult and imaginary qualities; to shroud their ignorance under inconceivable terms."

[36] Second Reply to the Bishop of Worcester, in The Works of John Locke, London (1794), III, 364.

cast, and do equally partake, has, I imagine, very much perplexed the knowledge of natural things. . . . But were there no other reason against it, yet the supposition of essences that cannot be known, and the making of them nevertheless to be that which distinguishes the species of things, is so wholly useless, and unserviceable to any part of our knowledge, that that alone were sufficient to make us lay it by.[37]

The current of thought at the close of the century was indeed cutting new channels. Malebranche conceives of matter as a passive entity put into motion by a divine impulse; generation he explains in terms of the old theory of pangenesis which Aristotle had rejected.[38] What was happening, of course, is only too familiar in history. Given certain assumptions which had to be justified, such as the reality of spirit or incorporeal substance, the defense had posited an hypothesis which could not be justified by observation. Against the growth of rationalism and empiricism it could not stand — no more than could Galen's postulate that there is an opening between the two ventricles of the heart. Newton proceeded to reduce matter to mechanical principles,

such as is that of Gravity, and that which causes Fermentation, and the Cohesion of Bodies. These Principles I consider, not as occult qualities, supposed to result from the specifick Forms of Things, but as general Laws of Nature, by which the Things themselves are form'd; their Truth appearing to us by Phaenomena, though their causes be not yet discover'd. For these are manifest Qualities, and their Causes only are occult. . . . To tell us that every Species of Things is endow'd with an occult specifick Quality by which it acts and produces manifest Effects, is to tell us nothing.[39]

Actually the theory of plastic nature declined not because of the attacks of opponents but because of the growth of new interests and of better explanations of the phenomena which the theory had undertaken to clarify.

A brief revival of the idea took place in 1703 when parts of Cudworth's Intellectual System were reprinted by Le Clerc. Bayle attacked them as fundamentally atheistic, an irony in view

[37] Essay of Human Understanding, in ibid., I, 450–51.

[38] See his Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion, trans. Morris Ginsberg, London (1923), especially pp. 193, 254, 270, and 287.

[39] Opticks, reprinted from ed. of 1730, New York (1931), p. 401.

of Cudworth's original purpose in elaborating the idea against atheism. Le Clerc replied without apparent success.[40] In a letter to Bierlinger dated October 28, 1710, Leibniz notes that plastic nature is an outmoded theory.[41]

The effects upon literature also soon passed out of the picture. In general, the poets of the Restoration, led by Dryden, followed the theories of the new science promoted by the Royal Academy. Sir Richard Blackmore's painfully "Philosophical Poem," the Creation, shows knowledge of the term but does not make it an integral feature of the formation of the world; he certainly does not know the refinements nor significance of its details. So he writes,

> Th'Elastic Spirits which remain at rest
> In the strait Lodgings of the Brain comprest,
> While by the ambient Womb's enliv'ning Heat
> Cheer'd and awaken'd, first themselves dilate;
> Then quicken'd and expanded ev'ry way
> The Genial Lab'rers all their Force display.
> They now begin to work the wondrous Frame,
> To shape the parts, and raise the vital Flame . . . .
> Thus with a steady and alternate toil
> They issue from, and to the Head recoil:
> By which their plastic Function they discharge.[42]

This was in 1712. Six years later Matthew Prior shows little more understanding in brief mentions of the theory in his poems Predestination, Solomon, and Alma. In Alma, indeed, the conception is introduced only to provide a fling at the Cambridge Platonists:

> You know, a certain Lady, Dick,
> Who saw Me, when I last was sick:
> She kindly talk'd, at least three Hours,
> Of Plastic Forms, and Mental Pow'rs:
> Describ'd our pre-existing Station,
> Before this vile Terrene Creation.[43]

[40] An outline of the controversy is given in Thomas Birch's "Account of the Life and Writings of Ralph Cudworth" prefixed to Cudworth, op. cit., pp. xix ff.

[41] Opera Omnia, Geneva (1718), V, 359.

[42] Creation: A Philosophical Poem, London (1712), pp. 282–84.

[43] Poems on Several Occasions, ed. A. R. Waller, Cambridge (1905), p. 233. See Monroe K. Spears, "The Meaning of Matthew Prior's 'Alma'," ELH, XIII (1946), 266–90.

Finally, in 1733, Pope writes in the Essay on Man,

> Look round our world; behold the chain of love
> Combining all below and all above.
> See plastic Nature working to this end,
> The single atoms each to other tend,
> Attract, attracted to, the next in place,
> Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.
> See matter next, with various life endued,
> Press to one centre stil, the gen'ral good. III, 7–14.

Pope evidently had no detailed knowledge of either origin or meaning of the word; with him the seventeenth century movement passes into limbo.[44]

So, after a life in English letters of about fifty years, the concept of plastic nature rapidly disappeared from a commanding position in the vital thought of its time. But not forever. Just before the middle of the eighteenth century, almost exactly a hundred years after its first English appearance, the idea returned to take again a prominent place in English thought. For Bishop Berkeley, in Siris (1744), that ever-surprising study of the wonderful virtues of tar water — and a stimulating work of philosophy — developed anew the old theory and endowed it with the vitality and significance that it had possessed for his grandfathers. Berkeley understood the idea thoroughly and was able to reinvest it with its original dignity. Probably from him rather than from its English originators of the previous century the young Sam Coleridge picked it up and passed it on to his contemporaries, from whom it descended almost to our own day. For after all, the problem of the mind-body dualism still remains a plaguing question in some quarters. But to trace the developments of plastic nature from Berkeley into the later period is a study for another time and place.

[44] William Warburton, in The Divine Legation of Moses, London (1738), I, 9, erroneously refers the idea to Bacon.

THE "REVERENT AGNOSTICISM" OF KARL BARTH

"It is indeed impious to base Religion on the denial of Reason. They are alike Sons of God, and the dishonoring of either is dishonor to both." A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

H. L. STEWART
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DENIAL of the competence of the human mind for exploration of the ultimate meaning of the Universe may be associated with a serene confidence that the secret is otherwise accessible. Athenians of the fifth century, B.C., had a mystical element of which Plato speaks at times with contempt but at other times with profound respect. Careless alike of the Protagorean scepticism and of its Socratic refutation, they would withdraw periodically to Eleusis for devotional rites, from which they came back radiant about the manner in which they had been "helped." Plotinus and his Neo-Platonists found in distrust of reasoning the basis for a surer trust. St. Augustine's Neo-Platonist youth was, as he said, a fitting preliminary for the mood of his mature Christian assurance: *Non in dialectica complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum.* More than seven centuries later, St. Bernard was not only distressed but alarmed as he overheard discussions at a Paris street corner among students coming from Abelard's lecture-room, where they had been actually encouraged to subject the Faith to intellectual analysis. The fourteenth century mystics of the Rhineland showed reaction on a great scale from the cut-and-dried "Natural Theology" of Aquinas. It had been too much for even Bonaventura and Duns Scotus.

Thus Karl Barth and the "Barthians" (of whom the leader of the School, in his suggestively satiric way, warns us that he is not one) had many a predecessor in the so-called "devout" Agnosticism. Whether this new Agnosticism can remain devout, whether its somewhat paradoxical title must not share the fate of the "Christian Pantheism" which used to be commended, and the

"Christian Communism" now preached by the Dean of Canterbury, it will be my concern in this article to discuss.

When Karl Barth began his Gifford Lectures on Natural Theology with the acknowledgment that his subject was one in whose real existence he had no belief and which it had been one of his main interests to expose as counterfeit, he at least roused his audience to close attention. There was force, too, in his plea that treatment so unusual as his might indirectly serve Lord Gifford's purpose, because a languid observer may have his interest quickened by attack on what he has long taken, insignificantly, for granted. One might make one's first real effort to understand what Natural Theology professes to be, when startled by argument, not from an unbeliever but from a theologian, that its long admitted claims were delusive. The incident recalls the story of a Pope who was asked to promote the circulation of a book by commending it, and who replied "I will do better for it than that; I will condemn it." No doubt the story is mythical, but it is *ben trovato*.

My question is whether Barthianism involves repudiation of *all* Natural Theology, or only of Natural Theology in a sense to which that name should never have been limited. That certain exponents of the system abroad present it as a narrow and intolerant "Fundamentalism," delighting in exposure of the complete futility of "Reason" and extolling "Revelation" as the only source for knowledge of God, is plain. But in view of the leader's warning about vagaries of his followers, we should look beyond them to his exposition of his own thought which in this matter they may have reflected amiss.

I.

One can readily understand his protest against some features of the theological Liberalism in which he had been brought up and which he had endeavored to apply in the duties of his first Swiss parish. His filial gratitude, so earnestly recorded, to his Ritschlian teacher Wilhelm Herrmann, is quite consistent with vehement dissent from what he came to regard as the logical upshot of Ritschlianism in making the Faith a purely "subjec-

tive" affair. But Herrmann was just as decided as Barth in rejection of "speculative theism." Their difference, sharp as it was on other issues, mattered little in their reasoning, and not at all in their conclusions, about this.

One may well endorse and applaud much that on "Apologetics" Barth has so aptly urged. The claims at one time set forth with such confidence by writers on that subject included a great deal that later consideration has shown to have been not only groundless but essentially irreligious. Such warnings as those of Bacon against pretence of detecting the divine purpose in processes of nature (as an old presumptuous phrase runs, "thinking the thoughts of God after Him") were disregarded, with the consequence Bacon foresaw — of producing "an heretical religion side by side with an imaginary and fabulous philosophy." [1] The shock administered almost a century ago by Darwinism to the Design Argument was enough to prompt anxious review of other claims made for the human mind that it can find its own way easily to cosmic explanation. But there is no need that such review should lead to abandonment of this whole philosophic enterprise; should make one discard all study of what is implied in the phenomena of the moral consciousness (those very storms of feeling which Barth, under the term "crisis," has reëmphasized in a manner suggestive by turns of Sakya-Mouni and of John Bunyan). It is just as much a project of Natural Theology to explore what the psychologists have revealed in the twentieth century as it was in the nineteenth to read the ultimate significance of the work of physicists and biologists. That Barth himself, in countless passages of his commentaries, is illustrating the very activity which he has denounced, makes one recall the warning of the Platonic Socrates to the sceptics of his time, that they could be consistent only by being speechless.

Natural Theology, such ultimate account of God and Man and the World Order as can be reached by reflection upon human experience, may be cultivated surely with equal interest by those who believe and by those who do not believe in a special disclosure on such matters, transcending the ordinary operations of the human mind. However confidently one may accept, and how-

[1] Bacon, Advancement of Learning, p. 87.

ever precious one may regard, the divine ἀποκάλυψις, it may remain instructive as well as interesting to consider how far (if at all) the world enigma could have been read without it. That St. Paul himself did not exclude or minimize such concern for Natural Theology is plain from such passages as Romans i. 18–20. Those, on the other hand, who recognize no divine intervention to supplement mankind's native powers of thought, surely deserve sympathetic encouragement rather than contemptuous ridicule when they are seen doing their utmost with such intellectual resources as they possess. Many a recent Barthian monograph appears to treat pagan thinkers in a style to recall "Fundamentalism" at its worst. It was bad enough for "Scriptural" devotees of long ago to imply, and at times to declare explicitly, that for the whole heathen world (except the fraction evangelized by Christian missionaries) there was no hope whatever. Such consignment of the vast majority of mankind to eternal perdition, for lack of what it was wholly impossible for them to acquire, was obvious denial of the divine justice. But how shall we characterize Barthians of the present, with pretence to liberal learning, as they deride every attempted approach to God by the reflective reasoning of pre-Christian or Arab thinkers? When one remembers how generous by comparison were such men as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine, one could wish for another satirist like Burns to depict these traducers of the Most High in another Holy Willie's Prayer.

Philosophers in general will proceed calmly with their analysis in this field, and as yet only a slight proportion of the philosophic theologians seem to be disturbed by the effort to stop them from serving their own Age as Aquinas and Nicolaus of Cusa, Hooker and Butler, Auguste Sabatier and Rudolf Eucken served their respective generations, in showing the conformity of the Faith with knowledge acquired from other quarters. Nor, I feel sure, does Barth really intend much that his argument has been construed by not a few readers, on an intellectual level far lower than his own, to mean. They understand him to be abjuring philosophy in general, and can quote many an incautious sentence from his writings to confirm this. But what he, like Ritschl, had in mind was philosophy in a very narrow sense, and the argument

he put forward against it is, paradoxically enough, philosophical. He seems to recognize just two types of the philosophic theism he reprobates: one a manipulation of the traditional "theistic proofs" (ontological, cosmological, teleological) as if they were pieces of geometrical reasoning from which belief in God must emerge with syllogistic cogency; the other a psychological analysis, dissolving the Faith into subjective statements of individual feeling — accounts of "experience" as wholly an internal mood, with no claim to present objective reality. In revulsion against each of these, Barth explodes against all philosophy as applied to religion.

"Is there anything more hopeless," he asks, "than the attempt that has been made in the last two hundred years, with ever increasing enthusiasm, to create a systematic link-up, or synthesis, or even a discriminate relationship, between theology and philosophy? Has there been one reputable philosopher who has paid the least attention to the work that the theologians have done in this direction?" [2] Reference to a date two hundred years ago at once suggests the Deist philosophers, and the study of Comparative Religion which they contributed so powerfully to promote. Barth may (and does) regard Comparative Religion as an idle, even a noxious, pursuit: in one of his more extraordinary outbursts he has told us that "The Holy Ghost needs no 'Movements'; the Devil has probably invented most of them." [3] He often writes as if he shared Milton's view that the ethnic Faiths, as a penalty of the Fall of Man, were allowed the Tempter to inspire:

> For God hath justly given the nations up
> To thy delusions,[4]

or as if he thought, with some of the early Christian Fathers, that such institutions as the Greek Mysteries were diabolic caricature of the Christian Sacraments. Estimates such as these it has been, in the judgment of most historians, a principal service of philosophy to correct, and they have been corrected by increasingly close attention (the very thing which Barth denies any

[2] Karl Barth, Theologische Existenz Heute, translation entitled "God in Action," p. 42, by Homrighausen and Ernst.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Paradise Regained, Book I.

important philosopher to have directed) to theological argument.

What, then, can he possibly mean by his statement that there has been no such concern in philosophic circles for the last two hundred years, and by challenging production of a single example? Names simply rush upon one's remembrance — Kant, Hegel, de Bonald, Lotze, T. H. Green, Edward Caird, Henri Bergson, and many more. One may argue with the agnostics (not those of "reverent" but of quite irreverent quality) that no success has been achieved in the enterprise of an *entente* between the two pursuits. But to deny that any "reputable" philosophers have engaged in it, with close and sustained attention, is ridiculous. Barth may think as meanly as he chooses of the contributions made by the long series of his philosophic predecessors in the Gifford Lectureship, but he will hardly question either that they were doing their industrious best, or that they included men deserving at least his cautious epithet "reputable." What he must then have meant by the amazing paragraph from which I have quoted is that *real* theology had no place in the discussions, and that what was there called by the name was just an excursion within the field of philosophy itself. Having thus excommunicated all churchmen except his own group, he can deny that the speculative world concerns itself at all with religion. Even this, however, is surely indefensible, in view of the deep critical concern which philosophers, by no means negligible in repute, have devoted in their journals to what they call "Barthianism."

In his own manifest applications of a philosophic method to religious thought, Barth might much better have quoted Schleiermacher as his pattern than have reproached him as an enemy. The "experience" of which Schleiermacher, in true philosophic spirit, speaks as calling for explanation is religious experience: not wholly or chiefly a set of beliefs, but including the whole range of moral and spiritual phenomena out of which for thousands of years religion after religion — embracing by far the larger part of the human race — had developed. Eighteenth-century sceptics dismissed it as altogether illusion; but in Schleiermacher's view, even so regarded it had need of some further account, showing how such widespread and such long-continued illusion had held the human mind. He found the cur-

rent eighteenth-century ways of accounting for it to be themselves mere illusory short-cuts of impatient criticism, ignoring what it could not explain. His argument that the phenomena of religion should be included, with all other phenomena (philosophy acknowledging no Barthian vetoes), in the search for an explanatory principle of the Universe, was in time perverted. By certain self-appointed representatives of Schleiermacher's School, it was made to analyze religion into mere interesting, capricious, and purely subjective individual feelings. But the fault was not Schleiermacher's. Nor was it altogether Hegel's fault if his account of Reason as showing itself, among other channels of its expression, in religious forms came to be understood as an intellectualizing of all religious ideas into so many propositions about the cosmic order illustrative of the intellectual *triple nisus*. Barth, despite his scorn of "Liberal Theology," is himself in his own way a liberal theologian, who would be at once so identified but for his use of certain ambiguities of expression. One remembers Loisy's satire on Harnack for his proposal to reconcile the Christian Faith with the claims of Science, when he said the claims must surely have been great, "for the Faith has become very small and very modest." [5] Barth is righteously alarmed, and has sounded a most opportune alarm, at Modernism such as that. When he calls for "crisis" where others are preaching "appeasement," he is indeed a major prophet of our time — like the late Bishop of Ripon who bade an appeasing Church Assembly realize that "The *Magnificat* was a song more revolutionary than the *Red Flag*." But once more it is by better reasoning, not by the abandonment of reasoning, that the faults of Reason are to be repaired.

This is illustrated with special clearness in the advocacy of "Existentialism" by Barth's most celebrated disciple, Emil Brunner. Whatever one may think of the value of this proffered method for eliminating the dispute between "objectivists" and "subjectivists," there can be no doubt that the analysis and the reasoning by which Brunner supports it are philosophical. The argument is like that of Bradley in Appearance and Reality or that of Bergson in Time and Free Will, about the provisional

[5] A. Loisy, L'évangile et l'église, p. 6.

character of scientific concepts, useful and indeed indispensable as instruments of action, but revealing fatal inconsistency as ultimate explanation. Brunner suggests that what Kierkegaard (to whom Barth owes so much) had in mind under the name "Existentialism" was what William James intended in his Will to Believe. "Perhaps," he writes, "it is possible to view in this perspective the original form of Pragmatism as set forth in the writings of William James." [6] That he was careful to keep Existentialism clear of the later Pragmatist developments, is easy to understand. But the argument is throughout a philosophical argument on the limits of "intellectualism" as revealed by its ultimate incoherence, the philosopher being — in Bradley's memorable phrase — just one who makes an unusually obstinate attempt to think consistently.

It will be pointed out in a later section of this article that Barth in the field of historical and literary criticism bids formal welcome to methods which in practice he totally neglects. In the field of philosophy he seems, on the other hand, to practise with subtle skill the very method which he has formally abjured. He and his associates insist on limiting the term "philosophy" to certain highly disputable philosophic systems, sometimes implying that it means Materialism, more frequently identifying it with Pantheism, and on this basis quite naturally proclaiming that the Christian theologian must repudiate it. Philosophy, however, not being a system of beliefs but a method, a method too which is conspicuously used by the very theological School that has thus verbally broken away from it, is unaffected by the Barthian diatribes.

II.

Barth depicts Liberal Theology as denying *Revelation*, and as bidding man trust to his own power of interpreting experience.

Professor Wilhelm Pauck has pointed out how suggestively the American "liberal" preachers illustrate in this respect at once the provocative of the Barthian reform and the source of the enthusiastic response it has elicited. The "theocentric religion" of the past has given place, he says, to "anthropocentric religious-

[6] E. Brunner, Christianity and Civilization, p. 34.

ness," a humanist concern for happiness, with no more than a formal salaam (often not even this) to traditional religious custom. "Religion has gradually become God-less. Whether there can be a religion without God, a God-less religion, is the question which constitutes the present crisis." [7] Barth's friend, Eduard Thurneysen, who was minister of a neighboring Swiss parish in the early days of their ministry, has described how together they made up their minds that as "liberal" theologians they had no significant message. Neither had anything to say beyond what might have been said with equal fitness in an editorial of the secular press, approved by readers of any Church or of none. "Both of us were religious Socialists, as we had to be in those times . . . Socialism, connected perhaps with temperance, was the movement that was to us the most important parable, if not the substance, of the Kingdom of God." [8] Their sharp recoil from this should be easily intelligible. Let anyone who is puzzled by the rapidly spreading influence of Barth's reproclamation of what he calls "the Word" ask himself what it was that made Wesley's enterprise so successful in eighteenth-century England, or the work of the Tractarians in the England of half a century later, or the Free Church of Scotland against Scottish "Moderates" of the 1840's and 1850's. More suggestive still, let him reflect on what won half Europe in the sixteenth century to the appeal of the Reformers, and why in turn something like a counter-Reformation is now noticeable as the Roman Church has preserved the apostolic character which for so many Protestants has given place to Humanism. This last comparison, in its fitness and in its unfitness, will be examined further in a subsequent section.

It was a natural choice that our prophet should take the writings of St. Paul as text to enforce his new argument, because the word "reveal" — or some synonym for it — recurs through them

[7] Wilhelm Pauck, Karl Barth, p. 11.

[8] Zwischen den Zeiten, 1927. Cf. Barth's address to a meeting of Swiss ministers, September 11, 1934, on "Ministry of the Word of God," in which he enumerated personal and cultural qualities desirable in a minister, and pointed out that the very Age which has successfully insisted on them is the Age for which the ministerial office seems to be more and more judged superfluous. He agrees that it *is* superfluous if it calls for such qualities only. The address was later published in Theologische Existenz Heute.

everywhere. Almost the same thought is in Romans about the uncovering of a mystery which had been kept secret since the world began; in Corinthians about what eye had not seen nor ear heard, but God had revealed by His Spirit; in Colossians about that which had lain hid from generations and ages, but now at length had been made manifest. That St. Paul there meant, by anticipation, to give warning against such views as those of Schleiermacher or Herrmann, is shrewdly suggested. Moreover, Barth can easily enlist the same apostolic support against optimistic Hegelians, with their confidence in what "Reason" will gradually accomplish, and can show how desperate is the puzzle for such "unaided" human effort in the "crisis" which is in no way relieved by refusal to acknowledge its presence. But I cannot see that what he calls Liberal Theology *as such* is open to the reproach he has showered without discrimination upon liberal theologians. Nor can I agree that either Schleiermacher or Herrmann is among those who, explicitly or by implication, have denied the unique divine disclosure in Christianity: this is a charge which I find no evidence to support, and much to disprove. Least of all can I understand what Barth means by combining formal welcome to historical and literary criticism of the Sacred Text with refusal to apply any such method in his own commentaries, and with denunciation of those who put in practice what he formally commends.

So strong is their emphasis on his hospitality to critical "Modernism" in handling the text of Scripture that Barth's disciples sometimes claim for him the discovery of the one reliable escape from Fundamentalism — like the claim of Socialists that, so far from being Communists, they are the one Party by which the triumph of Communism may be prevented. The purely formal character of his salaam to the biblical critics is exemplified by his own extraordinary procedure in his treatise on the Epistle to the Romans. What are we to think of a commentator who, having acknowledged and even extolled the value of a method, neglects that method altogether in dealing with material to which, if anywhere, it is exactly applicable? No attempt is made in the voluminous commentary on Romans to assess the results of the long, painstaking effort of scholars to fix date, circumstances,

local reference of the text. Although John Bunyan was quite unappreciative, and indeed unaware, of critical scholarship in relation to the Bible, the dazzling qualities of allegory in the Pilgrim's Progress should not be disparaged for this defect in its author. Barth's commentary on Romans treats the New Testament in the manner of Bunyan, as if it had been written yesterday, as an analysis of the spiritual plight of mankind, valid equally and equally intelligible — just as it stands, in translation — at all times. Not for a moment do I question the penetrating significance of much that he has to say about the spiritual life, or the soundness of the claim (when properly stated) for Romans that it lays bare the psychology of the soul in the twentieth not less than in the first century. I suspect, too, one source of the contrast I have indicated between verbal acknowledgment and practical neglect. Is there here a vestigial trace of Barth's early training in the German philosophical system from which he thinks he has completely freed himself? It has been urged as a reproach to Hegel that he invented a new intellectual vice — that of "looking a difficulty in the face, even presenting it more clearly than it was ever presented before, and then going on as if nothing of the sort had occurred." Henry Sidgwick observed about him that he provided no means of distinguishing between the contradictions which he acknowledged to be evidence of error and the other contradictions which he took as tokens of a deeper truth. But we search in vain through Barth's writings for anything like even the "higher synthesis" by which perplexing inconsistency might be concealed. Its stark challenge is there, and I guess his early Hegelian practice as its source.

III.

Barthians have a liking for the epithet "Radical Reformed," and often speak as if their purpose were to reëstablish Reformation doctrine which had been neglected or perverted through the corrupt influence of either Romanizers or Protestant Modernists. Readers of the Doctrine of the Word of God may indeed observe the same habit of dictating "the truth," with concern only to explain what it means, and with complete disregard of doubt

whether it is "the truth," that is familiar in Calvin's Institutes. But the reproach which, in the Preface to the second edition of his Doctrine of the Word, Barth repels with considerable heat (namely, that what he has revived is much more Scholasticism than Reformation teaching) was surely no puzzle to anyone but himself. For Calvin, the authority, everywhere taken for granted in the Institutes, was Holy Scripture; Barth's authority, though he speaks of "Word of God," is not merely or even chiefly the *written* Word, which has for him its value only as the incomplete and at times inaccurate record of what he calls the Church's "proclamation." How he would have been welcomed by the Council of Trent for such support of its Traditionalism, and how the Reformers would have abjured this compromise with the mere "Word of Man," one can easily imagine. Perhaps indeed he is on the right side on this issue, and the sixteenth century Reformers were wrong. On that I am expressing here no opinion. My point is merely that there could hardly be a less appropriate epithet for Barthian doctrine on the matter than "Radical Reformed" — if by it is meant developing the Reformation enterprise to the utmost. It has revoked much more than it has developed the work of the Reformers.

How, with a copy of the Institutes before them, the Barthians can claim Calvin's support for either repudiation of Natural Theology or assertion of "the Word" expressed in Confessions as determining what Scripture means, is beyond my power to understand. The first five chapters of the Institutes might well have been adopted as introduction to each of the series of Gifford Lectures whose purpose Barth has declared vain, and it is by no means improbable that just those chapters were in Lord Gifford's mind as he planned the course which he meant to endow. What, again, would Calvin have had to say of the statement that "Any arbitrary appeal on the part of Dogmatics to the very Bible itself is forbidden by the fact that it is itself Confession-bound"? [9] That the Bible is not the authority by which the Church's tradition is to be tested, but the Church's tradition is the authority by which interpreters of the Bible must proceed, seems as nearly as

[9] Karl Barth, Credo pp. 7, 8 (J. S. McNab's translation).

possible the inverse of the Reformers' doctrine.[10] Out of innumerable sources, including the record of Luther's Leipsic Disputation and Knox's First Book of Discipline, it is sufficient to quote Calvin's Institutes, chapter vii, in which answer is given to the plea that "The Scripture hath as much authority and weight as is granted unto it by consent of the Church." "The same Scriptures are of full authority with the faithful by no other means than when they be persuaded that they came from heaven, as if the lively voice of God were heard there . . . The eternal and inviolable truth of God resteth not upon man's pleasure."

Not the Reformers, but the fourteenth century mystics might be named with show of truth as the churchmen whose ways of thinking the Barthians have revived. Like Meister Eckhart or Suso, like Ruysbroek or the author of the Theologia Germanica, six centuries ago, they speak as men to whom immediate spiritual intuition has been its own guarantee, and for whom reasoned argument in such a field would be not merely needless but profane. I am not here disparaging the mystics. That certain axioms, neither provable nor dubitable, lie at the basis of all thought in religion as in morals, was a truth they did well to emphasize against the extravagant Natural Theology of Aquinas. But mysticism, properly conceived, is not anti-philosophical: it is itself a philosophy, as Nicolaus of Cusa — that subtlest philosophic thinker of the middle fifteenth century, who was at the same time a mystic — so convincingly showed in his De Visione Dei and his Docta Ignorantia.

Most cordially and gratefully do I join with the Barthians in extolling Barth's leadership of return to the idea of revelation where there has been such a mood of explaining this away, very much as Prodicus of Ceos dissolved Greek prophecy into "the conjectures of a sagacious man." A like tribute is due to his eloquent and fearless insistence, not merely or chiefly in Hitler's Germany (while he was permitted to remain there) but in the

[10] A passage of God in Action (translated from Theologische Existenz Heute) may be quoted to refute what I have here argued. Barth there (p. 30) says "The Scriptures govern the Church, and not the Church the Scriptures." But this is just another case of flagrant contradiction, making the interpreter of Barth despair.

whole environment of twentieth-century Europe, upon the unique mission of the Church, upon her duty as well as her right to rescue the souls of men from concern with mere "Humanism" in whatever form — Nazi, Fascist, Communist, or Protestant Modernist. "In twenty years," writes one of his translators, "Karl Barth has, in God's providence, changed the whole direction of the Church's thought. Every part of the Church of Christ throughout the whole world is to-day wrestling with the questions raised by him." [11] It is indeed a signal achievement to have accomplished so much as can incite to such extravagant eulogy. "Subtracting the due subtrahend" (as Carlyle would have said), we should acknowledge a great debt to the writer and teacher who has so recalled the Church to the challenge of her unique trust, at a time when under various pretexts this was being reduced to a subordinate assignment of secular society. His was indeed an ever-memorable warning, in perfect expression, against accepting as the Church's office that of "providing worldly society with an ecclesiastical cupola or dome."

Though Barth has no respect for a "Science of Religions," his own profound and widespread influence furnishes just now an excellent example of the explanatory use of such a science. As we try to understand how each of the great ethnic Faiths has been so tenacious in its hold upon multitudes century after century, we naturally look (as in the data of any other scientific generalization) for some common element, some "active prinple" (as chemists would say) that is the same amid differences. In each the scientist of religion finds a passionate effort to reconcile ideals of life with life's hardships, to get some "sure and certain hope" in the Unseen, by reference to which the perplexities and failures of the present may be relieved. Even the religions which apparently dispensed with any such "appeal beyond phenomena" are seen to have developed, however illogically, some such preserving accompaniment: Buddhism and Confucianism, for example, however agnostic in formulation by their founders, came to imply, in ritual observance, a constant consciousness of powers unseen. It was this element, constituting the strength of all great enduring religions, that Barth found the

[11] Translator's preface to Barth's Credo (Translation by J. S. McNab).

Liberal Theology of twentieth-century Protestantism more and more disposed to eliminate. His appeal lies in the power with which he reproclaimed it, disavowing the faults of narrow uncritical Fundamentalism — whether asserted in Roman Catholic claim of papal infallibility or by the Protestant "bibliolaters" — that has so embarrassed and discredited it. That the disavowal was by no means consistently maintained, it has been one of my concerns in this article to point out. But its explicit announcement at once conciliated attention.

IV.

Agnosticism is the doctrine that knowledge of the Universe is limited to observation of its systematic order, without attempt to penetrate questions of its origin, its destiny, or of the ultimate significance of human life (at once bound by its laws and insurgent against them). Such mood is "reverent" if it contemplates the Great Mystery not with impatience or with indifference, but with awe. A flippant agnosticism, content with the maxim "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die," is only too well known. When John Stuart Mill was called "a saint among the rationalists," the fitness of the description was apparent to everyone who had marked the intense conscientiousness, in others dependent on some form of religion (or at least expressing itself constantly in religious terms) but in him self-sustaining after the religious basis had been dissolved and the language of a "utilitarian" ethic had been fashioned into a devoutness of its own. By the reverent agnosticism of Karl Barth is meant a mood different from this, a mood indeed almost its inverse. Barth shares Mill's disbelief in the human mind's power to explore beyond "phenomena," but differs from him in the strident contempt with which he dismisses a project which Mill gave up reluctantly. To the new agnosticism such intellectual defeat is not an embarrassment against which faith in a moral order must struggle to survive; it is the precondition of restored vitality in a faith which had decayed by reason of its intellectual associations. In presence of this further attempt to reinforce Revelation through the denial of Reason, one naturally reflects upon the record of some similar attempts in the past.

Almost a century ago, H. L. Mansel — in his Bampton Lectures at Oxford on "The Limits of Religious Thought" — urged a pious fettering of the human mind, not unlike the vow of intellectual poverty which Barth in his Gifford Lectures at St. Andrews would commend more than half a century later. With a like emphasis on "the Word of God" as an oracle to be submissively received, not critically adjusted into agreement with knowledge from some other source, the Bampton lecturer of 1850 bade his listeners cultivate even in the sphere of the great moral values a speculative agnosticism that should be the preliminary of faith. "In His moral attributes," said Mansel, "no less than in the rest of His infinite being, God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out." [12] The effect on some listeners, who would yet influence a wide circle, was by no means to make them reverent. John Morley, who had come to Oxford with the intention of taking Holy Orders, was diverted in a direction that Mansel never meant. John Richard Green was saved only by the influence of that liberal Protestant theologian, Arthur Stanley, from a similar fate.[13]

It is indeed a difficult, and surely a needless, burden upon the religious mind to conceive the Most High as having endowed human beings with faculties and interests which for the vast majority (all except those Christianized) must be for ever frustrated. What a picture, of even the deliverances of "conscience" denied all value apart from supernatural disclosures limited to a very few, and of the utmost sincerity of "poor pagans" vainly struggling to escape collision with the divine justice! John Stuart Mill's outburst against such doctrine is worth recalling here. "Convince me of this," he exclaimed, "and I shall bear my fate as I may . . . Whatever power such a Being may have over me, there is one thing he shall not do: he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no Being 'good' who is not what I mean when I apply this epithet to my fellow-creatures. And if such a Being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go." [14] This is not reverential, in either Mansel's sense or

[12] H. L. Mansel, Bampton Lectures, p. 160.
[13] Letters of Dean Stanley, II, p. 14, edited by Prothero and Bradley.
[14] J. S. Mill, Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 129.

Barth's. But Mill might surely have said about such account as they have presented of the Most High "By faith I have disbelieved and denied."

Cannot a *rapprochement* be reached by these theological groups whose antagonism seems to arise in a measure at least from sheer confusion or ambiguity of language? Immense service has been rendered by Karl Barth to the reproclamation of a distinctive Christian Message in a world of Modernist "appeasement" — with dangers like those of the international appeasement at Munich. He has sounded a warning like Winston Churchill's of 1938, that the theological "peace in our time" of such Modernist accommodation is no gain, but a disaster. He has inspired in some of his enthusiastic followers an effort superior to his own, though in the direction to which he pointed — the greatest of all services that a teacher can render. Emil Brunner's Christianity and Civilization was indeed a book for the hour, rich in expositions of the unique service rendered by the Christian religion in the past and to be awaited from the same source again, amid the debacle of pretentious secularist remedies for world chaos. Barth and his associates have contributed invaluably to further and clearer exposition of what George Steven used to call "the psychology of the Christian Soul." But why should all this precious work be marred by fury in alternate gusts against Roman Catholics and against Modernist Protestants, not for their faults of which, like others, they have many, but for the very essence of their professed purpose, as if they were the enrolled agents of Antichrist? Why should literary and historical criticism of the Bible be at once approved and ignored? Why should philosophy, so plainly active in Barthian religious analysis and reconstruction, be excommunicated as not merely an alien but an enemy?

Renan suggestively predicted that though he and his contemporaries might remain "at heart Sulpician" despite the intellectual turmoil of their Age, there would be moral break-down in the next generation of sceptics.[15] I think there is reason to fear

[15] "Perhaps the ruin of idealistic beliefs may have to follow hard upon that of the beliefs which are supernatural, and the real abasement of mankind's morality will date from the day it has seen the truth of things." (Renan, The Future of Science, Preface xix. Translation by A. D. Vandaur.)

that the Reverent Agnosticism inculcated by Karl Barth may in others remain agnostic while losing its reverence. But the damage is not yet beyond repair.

ON THE ORDER OF THE ATHENIAN CATALOGUES OF *AISEITOI*

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According to Pausanias II 14 one of the two main differences between the cult at Phlius and that at Eleusis lay in the circumstance that at Phlius the hierophant was not appointed for life (οὐκ ἐς τὸν βίον πάντα ἀποδέδεικται). The implication that at Eleusis the hierophant was appointed for life is borne out by inscriptions such as the one concerning the old man Glaucus who died as hierophant after many years in office. On the other hand, the inscriptions never mention living men as ex-hierophants, ex-daduchi, ex-sacred-heralds or ex-altar-priests, except such altar priests as resigned to take the higher post of daduchus. Therefore, students have long been agreed that the hierophant, daduchus, sacred herald and altar priest, i.e. the incumbents of the four great Eleusinian priesthoods, held their office for life. (See, for example, P. Foucart, Les mystères d'Éleusis [Paris, 1914], 168–206, especially 171 for the hierophant and 203 for the sacred herald.) As far as I know, this interpretation of the evidence has never been refuted. Recently, however, this interpretation of the evidence has been repudiated without argument by J. A. Notopoulos ("Studies in the Chronology of Athens under the Empire," Hesperia XVIII [1949], 1–57, especially 1 and 23), who, asserting, in what he describes as a "systematic study," that the hierophant and sacred herald "occupy their office for an interval of one or more years, then vacate it only to be re-elected to it later," dresses a table of the catalogues of *aiseitoi* (the four great Eleusinian priests and various clerks and other functionaries entitled to public maintenance) in what purports to be a chronological order. It is possible that some students of Attic Epigraphy and of Roman Athens will welcome an opportunity to have the conservative point of view expressed, because the abundance of epigraphical material from the period 165–210 A.D. makes chronological precision a recurrent *desideratum*; and therefore I present here for the reader's choice an alternative table which is based on the assumption that in normal times the great Eleusinian priests had indeed permanence of tenure. The importance of the Eleusinian sanctuary in just this period endows the list with another and greater element of interest.

After my table was compiled independently without much regard to

Date	Inscription	hierophant	daduchus	sacred herald	altar priest	ἐπὶ Σκιάδος	undersecret'y	flutist
165/6	Hesp. XII, No. 23	.....	.....	.....	.....	Aphrodisius	Isidotus	Eucharistus
166/7	IG II² 1773 (AJA XLV 539)	Flavius (Leosthenes)	Pompeius A	Pinarius	.....	Aphrodisius	Isidotus	.....
167/8	IG II² 1774	Flavius (Leosthenes)	Pompeius A	Pinarius	.....	Aphrodisius	Isidotus	Eucharistus
168/9	Hesp. XI, No. 18	.....	.....	.....	.....	Zenobius	Isidotus	Eucharistus
168/9	IG II² 1775	Julius	Pompeius A	Pinarius	Memmius	Zenobius	Isidotus	Epigonus
169/70	IG II² 1776, 1781	Julius	Pompeius A	Pinarius	Memmius	Zenobius	Myron	Epigonus
	Hesp. XI, No. 1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Myron	.....
173/4	Hesp. III, No. 43	.....	.....	.....	Memmius	Hermeias	Myron	Aphrodisius
178/9	IG II² 1789	Julius	Pompeius A	Nummius A	.....	.....	.....	.....
ca. 180	IG II² 1794	Julius	.....	.....	Memmius	Hermeias	Myron	Aphrodisius
ca. 181	IG II² 1795	.....	.....	.....	.....	Hermeias	Myron	Aphrodisius
182/3	Hesp. IV, No. 11	Julius	.....	.....	Memmius	Hermeias	Myron	Aphrodisius
ca. 186	Hesp. XI, No. 6	.....	.....	.....	.....	Aristides	.....	Aphrodisius
186/7	IG II² 1796	.....	.....	.....	.....	Aristides	.....	Aphrodisius
187/8	IG II² 1788 (Hesp. XI, No. 21)	Julius	Aelius (Praxagoras)	Herennius A	Memmius	.....	.....	.....
188/9	Hesp. XI, No. 23	.....	.....	.....	.....	Aristides	P[rotogenes?]	Spendon
190/1	IG II² 1798	Julius	Aelius (Praxagoras)	Herennius A	Memmius	Hermeias	.....	Spendon
ca. 191	IG II² 1797	.....	.....	.....	.....	Hermeias	?[Pr]otogenes	Hermodorus
192	IG II² 1792	Julius	Aelius (Praxagoras)	Herennius A	Claudius (Sospis)	.....	.....	.....
191/2	Hesp. XI, No. 5	.....	.....	.....	.....	Protion	.....	Hermodorus
ca. 194	IG II² 1806	Nummius X	Claudius (Philippus)	Nummius Y	absent	Protion	.....	Hermodorus
195/6	IG II² 1806a	unidentified	unidentified	unidentified	absent	Protion	.....	Hermodorus
ca. 197	IG II² 1790 etc.	Nummius X	Pompeius B	Nummius Y	absent	Protion	.....	Eucharistus
ca. 198	IG II² 1799	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Menophilus	Aphrodisius
198/9	Hesp. XI, No. 36	.....	.....	.....	.....	Protion	Menophilus	.....
209/10	IG II² 1077	Claudius Y of Marathon	Fabius of Marathon	Herennius B of Hermeia	Claudius (Sospis) of Melite	Aristides	Menophilus	Athenaeus

Figure 1. Table showing chronologically important *aiseitoi* between 165 and 210 A.D. All the merely annual appointees have been omitted and of the perennial appointees the pyrphorus, who causes no difficulty.

known or inferred dates, I assigned an exact date to each catalogue if the exact date was known or if it could be inferred from the secretary cycles, the contemporary operation of which was pointed out by Notopoulos. This does not mean that I accept every date or identification of a secretary by Notopoulos. For instance, in the catalogue first published in Hesperia XI, 1942, No. 6, p. 35, Notopoulos (p. 18) restores the title of the prytany secretary before one of the several names which have lost a title by fracture. Clearly the restoration, which moreover presupposes a curiously long area unengraved between title and name, has no evidential value and should probably be excluded as impossible if the order of the *aiseitoi* catalogues turns out not to support it (and I fear the order will not support it). Notopoulos, saying merely "*A new study* of this inscription *shows* (he meant "Further speculation suggests to me") that the office of Ἀφροδείσιος Φλυεύς is that of περὶ τὸ βῆμα, in which case we must date this inscription in 190/1" (italics mine), made this restoration quite without support. Nor do we always agree on what constitutes a known archon.

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